



Goldman's Blankfein  
On Why They've  
Done Nothing Wrong

Joe Klein Takes  
On the GOP's  
Scare Tactics



No Laughing  
Matter: Comedy in  
The Age of Obama

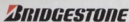
# TIME



**WARNING:** This hamburger may be hazardous to your health. Why the American food system is bad for our bodies, our economy and our environment—and what some visionaries are trying to do about it.

## The Real Cost of Cheap Food

BY BRYAN  
WALSH



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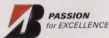
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On the cover: Photograph for TIME by Bill Kalis. Insets, from left: Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty; John Ueland for TIME

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# 10 Questions.

The *Entourage* star's latest film is *The Goods: Live Hard, Sell Hard*. **Jeremy Piven** will now take your questions



## Next Questions

Ask Andy Roddick your questions for an upcoming interview, at [time.com/10questions](http://time.com/10questions)

### What are the goods of *The Goods*?

*Getachew Balcha*, ADDIS ABABA  
The goods can refer to what you bring to the table as a salesman—you know, “Do you have the goods?” My character is named Don (the Goods) Ready because he has what it takes to make the sale, to live the dream. He’s actually very delusional, and it’s fantastic to play characters like that.

**How does the fact that Ari Gold, your character in *Entourage*, is based on a real individual affect the way you play the part?**

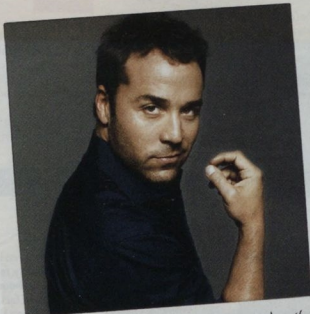
*Ibrahim Khan*  
LAHORE, PAKISTAN

The character is loosely based on Ari Emanuel, whose brother Rahm Emanuel is the White House chief of staff. He was my agent for a time, so I did get an eyeful and an earful of Ari Emanuel—that is for sure. I haven’t heard any of his comments about my character. If he didn’t enjoy it, I would’ve heard about it.

**Do you ever apologize to Ari Gold’s assistant, Lloyd, for treating him the way you do, once the cameras stop rolling?**

*Sumi Sivadel*, WASHINGTON  
I used to say I’m sorry to Rex Lee, who plays Lloyd, and he would be like, “Oh, God, who cares?” I do these awful things to him between “action” and “cut,” and he just takes it like a champ. I will say that it does all completely pay off this season. I can’t tell you more because I’d probably get into a lot of trouble.

**In many of your roles, it seems that you create a dynamic character with a bit of an obsessive**



Aug 14<sup>th</sup> "The Goods"  
GO GET SOME! *Jeremy Piven*

**quality. Is that a reflection of your own personality?**

*Megan McCloskey*  
AUSTIN, TEXAS

Before I played Ari Gold, I was in probably 40 movies and playing a lot of very soft-spoken characters, also-rans, best friends and whatnot. That was all easily forgotten as soon as I put Ari’s power suit on.

**It seems that your career has progressed gradually over the years. Did you ever consider giving up acting?**

*Tala Woods*  
JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

I never considered giving up acting. I’ve always worked as an actor because I’ve taken scraps and made meals out of them. I think the fast-talking

nature of some of my characters came from the fact that I tried to just keep talking until they pulled me off the set. *Singles* is a good example. I think I had maybe 1½ lines, and I turned it into a minute-and-a-half monologue.

**What would you say has been your favorite character to play thus far?**

*Prabhjot Sidhu*  
MISSISSAUGA, ONT.

I had the time of my life playing Don (the Goods) Ready. I really did. We experimented so much, and I was doing things where I just thought, This will never be in the movie—there’s no way. And then not only did it end up in the movie, but it ended up really working.

**Your parents founded the Piven Theatre Workshop. What is the Piven technique?**

*Brandon Nadig*, CHICAGO  
Well, there isn’t a specific technique per se. The goal is to be totally present as an actor. You do scene study or improv games. I’ve been doing that since I was 8 years old, and the result is whatever in God’s name I’m doing now.

**After you left *Speed-the-Plow* citing mercury poisoning, playwright David Mamet quipped that you’d left show business to become a thermometer. Do you have a response?**

*Ryan Vlastelica*  
NEW YORK CITY

It was one of the great joys of my life to be on Broadway and to do his words. It’s a very funny line, and you would expect nothing less from David Mamet.

**Have you stopped eating sushi?**

*Rick Dorzbach*, RIVER EDGE, N.J.  
I haven’t had a piece of fish of any kind in 11 months. My mercury levels have gone down from just below 60 to 3 now. I feel like a different person.

**Of all the different looks you’ve had on film, which hairstyle have you liked the best?**

*Christian Zafiroglu*  
NEW CASTLE, DEL.

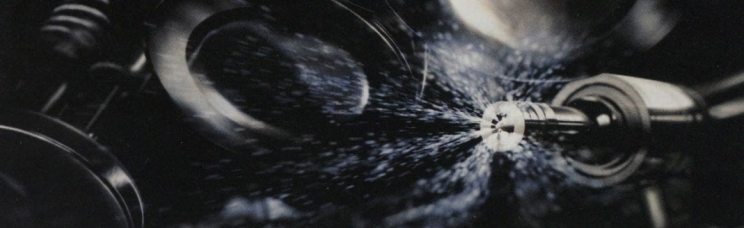
*Smokin’ Aces*. I’ve never had so much hair in my life. It was the only time I’d worn a wig, and it was a brilliant one.



VIDEO AT [TIME.COM](http://TIME.COM)

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# Postcard: Sri Lanka. After decades of bitter fighting, the return of a 500-year-old icon to its jungle shrine offers Sri Lankans a chance to heal.

## How the Mother of Madhu survived a civil war

BY AMANTHA PERERA

**Global Dispatch**  
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**T**HE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION IS one of the holiest days on the Roman Catholic calendar, marking the time the Virgin Mary is believed to have been physically taken into heaven after death. On Aug. 15, Sri Lanka's Catholics celebrated a second miracle: the survival of a 500-year-old statue of the Virgin through a quarter-century of conflict and its safe return to the jungle shrine it calls home.

For more than 25 years, the village of Madhu—185 miles (300 km) from Colombo, the capital—was a battleground of the civil war between the predominantly Sinhalese government and the separatist Tamil Tigers, which killed an estimated 70,000 people. Some brave believers made the pilgrimage during lulls in the fighting, but their numbers were few and their trips brief. "We came, we worshipped, we left—that was it," says Lesley Fernando, an ethnic Sinhalese who visited during the war's fragile truces. It was not until April 2008 that the Sri Lankan military gained control of the shrine; the Tigers, who fought for a separate Tamil homeland, were finally crushed this May.

The Madhu Matha—the Mother of Madhu—occupies a unique place in Sri Lanka's spiritual cosmology. Only about 7% of the population is Christian, but the shrine counts adherents among both the mostly Buddhist Sinhalese and the predominantly Hindu Tamils. As such, the first Feast of the Assumption since the fighting ended was a rare opportunity for members of both groups to come together.

As the feast day approached, some 500,000 pilgrims thronged the road to Madhu, passing security checkpoints and bomb-damaged buildings in vans, trucks, buses and three-wheeled *tuk-tuks*. Along the way stood camps where some of the more than 280,000 people who were displaced by the last phase of the fighting now live. Red skull and crossbones signs warned of land mines in the jungle; on both sides



**Holy day** Pilgrims parade past a statue of the Virgin Mary during the Feast of the Assumption

of the road. At the shrine, the constant hum of prayers and hymns rose above the rustling of pilgrims' feet. Piles of sandals and shoes accumulated by the doors as visitors joined the long line that slowly snaked around the church, allowing them to touch the altar where the venerated Madhu Matha stood.

The statue—a 2-ft. (61 cm) icon of the mother of Jesus, believed to be of Indian origin and brought to Sri Lanka in 1500—is renowned for its protective powers. "This is holiest of the holiest for us. The Virgin has always kept us safe," says Benedict Perera, 70. The church came through the war largely unscathed; by 2007, some 10,000 people had taken refuge in its compound. But in April 2008, as the military advanced, Madhu's priests received orders from their bishop to move the Virgin from the front lines. They spirited away the statue early one evening amid constant shelling and rain. "Nothing, absolutely nothing happened to the statue," recalls the Rev. S. Emilianuspillai, then the shrine's caretaker. "We kept moving."

The Mother of Madhu had been

in danger before. In the 17th century, Dutch Protestants tried to eradicate the Catholicism brought to the island by the Portuguese. The Virgin Mother was secreted away until 1670, when it was rediscovered by a woodcutter, miraculously hidden in the trunk of a tree. (In a corner of the church, pilgrims now fill bags and handkerchiefs with holy earth from the spot where the tree sprouted.)

At the shrine, visitors speak of the statue as a symbol of hope for all Sri Lankans. "You see people from all religions flocking here," says Mahavilachchiye Wimala Thero, a Buddhist monk from the central district of Anuradhapura. "This is the miracle—that this statue can bring together all Sri Lankans." As the Virgin was paraded around the compound, many worshippers wept. Fathers lifted their young children to their shoulders to get a better view, while the compound reverberated to tens of thousands of voices singing "Ave Maria." "The Virgin has brought us together. She has given us hope," says Singarayan Celestine, 70, a Tamil who lost two sons in the war and has a third still missing. "It is now up to us to live together." ■



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## Of Crunches and Lunches

RE "THE MYTH ABOUT EXERCISE" [Aug. 17]: I must take issue with some of the points portrayed as fact. Numerous studies have shown that exercise is indeed central to an effective weight-loss program. The key concept is a simple equation of energy balance: calories expended throughout the day must exceed calories consumed as food. And contrary to the data selected for your article, studies have shown that most exercisers are not uncontrollably hungry after a workout. We strongly encourage reporting that portrays both sides of an issue so readers can decide for themselves—instead of being led down a potentially harmful path.

James Pivarnik, President  
American College of Sports Medicine  
INDIANAPOLIS

THIS IS ONE OF THE BEST ARTICLES I'VE ever read on the subject. I have maintained for years that exercise contributes very little to weight loss, but I could never have explained it so eloquently. My reasons for exercising are all the other ones listed.

William Jenner, ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.

YOU MISSED THE POINT. THE MESSAGE should be "Get moving, and plan healthy, low-calorie snacks." If the article discourages even a few of the fence exercisers, you have done your readers a huge disservice.

Barbie Collins, HINGHAM, MASS.

**'Charles Rangel has been in Washington too long. Your story illustrates why so many of us have such a low opinion of members of Congress.'**

John Spears, FAIRHOPE, ALA.

**Lion in winter** The Congressman, subject of an Aug. 17 profile, has lost some clout

YOUR ENTIRE ARTICLE IS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION that the vast majority of regular exercisers eat unhealthy foods. Why, then, don't you focus on the food?

Charles Toppan, BROOKLINE, MASS.

NO CREDIBLE FITNESS EXPERT WOULD ARGUE that one can lose weight through exercise alone, but the tone of your article was unnecessarily discouraging. If people use exercise as an excuse to eat poorly, that's a lack of discipline or guidance, not a "myth" about exercise. Interestingly, I find that now after workouts, I crave healthy foods, many of which are surprisingly tasty.

Nancy Melucci, SACRAMENTO, CALIF.

## I'll Take a Pre-Owned, Please

RE "CASH FOR CLUNKERS" [Aug. 17]: IT IS great to see new cars selling, the economy boosted and gas guzzlers reined in. But I am dismayed by pictures of late-model, low-mileage vehicles being destroyed. There should be an additional layer of the CARS program that would allow the millions of people who could never buy a new car to trade up their really old clunkers for more-efficient used cars.

Lydia Ross Hartt, HOT SPRINGS, ARK.

## Making a Move on Health Care

RAMESH PONNURU MAKES THE CASE THAT President Barack Obama's health-care plan might fail because it is filled with contradictions [Aug. 17]. It may not be perfect, but it

## SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

■ In our cover story on exercise, we suggested that fat could be converted to muscle; it cannot be [Aug. 17]. Muscle, which is built up, and fat, which is burned, are different types of tissue.

■ We published the wrong Web address for a company mentioned in "Urban Animal Husbandry" [Aug. 17]. It is MyPetChicken.com.

■ In Milestones, we misidentified Harry Patch as the last surviving British veteran of World War I [Aug. 10]. He was the last who had fought on the Western Front.

is a program most Americans support. Six times since 1948, we have elected Presidents who were committed, at least on paper, to the principle of universal health care. I think we have failed our system, not the other way around. We send people to Washington to do our work. Sadly, they don't provide us with the results we want. Instead, lobbyists for health-related corporations get what they want. So let us look really hard at our system—and also at ourselves.

Tom Edgar, BOISE, IDAHO

## The Kids' Journalism Is Alright

YOUR STORY ON ANN ARBOR'S CHANGING media landscape incorrectly noted that the *Michigan Daily*—of which I am the editor in chief—doesn't cover the town [Aug. 17]. A quick glance at MichiganDaily.com would have revealed that the *Daily* does cover Ann Arbor politics and business along with its extensive coverage of the University of Michigan. We were, in fact, the only publication in the city to officially endorse candidates in recent city-council elections. The *Daily* may not be a new online operation promising to solve journalism's financial woes, but it has been a consistent and credible source of news in Ann Arbor for more than 119 years.

Gary Graca, ANN ARBOR, MICH.



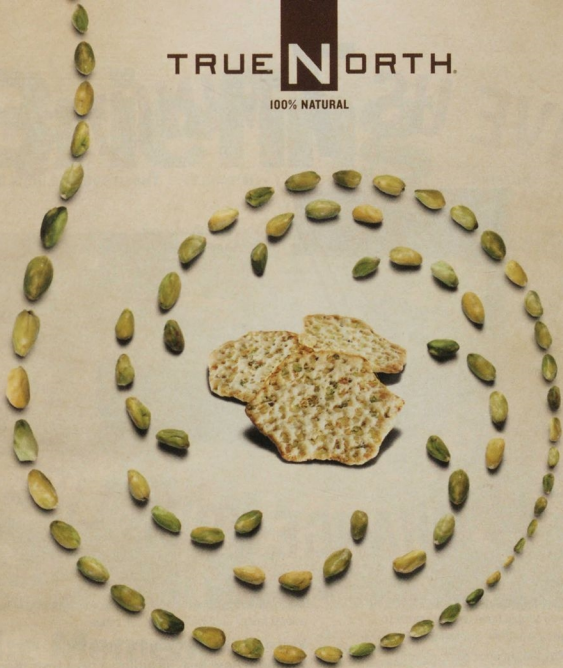
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# Briefing

THE WORLD SPOTLIGHT VERBATIM

HISTORY MILESTONES



## The Moment

8/19/09: Kabul

IN THE WEEKS AFTER PRESIDENT Obama took office, his Administration sought to manage expectations on Afghanistan. Yes, it was the right war, a war of necessity—but winning didn't require turning the country into a "Jeffersonian democracy" (Obama's phrase) or a "Central Asian Valhalla" (as Defense Secretary Robert Gates put it). The implication was that President Bush had become too distracted by secondary, nation-building

goals, such as ensuring that Afghan girls went to school. Obama would focus on the main task: defeating al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

But as Afghanistan holds its presidential election, the Obama Administration has arrived at the same conclusion that Bush did: nation-building is essential to defeating extremism in Afghanistan. U.S. security goals in the region cannot be achieved purely by military means; in order for American

and NATO troops to someday be able to head home, Afghanistan needs good governance and modern institutions.

The struggle to achieve such stability will persist long after the election itself. Afghanistan's current President,

**It may not matter who wins the Afghan election: the nation needs stability more**

Hamid Karzai, was once a darling of Washington but has proved feckless. His misrule has contributed greatly to the Taliban revival that the U.S. and its allies are now trying to quell. There's not much reason to hope that a re-elected

Karzai will get significantly better. The White House's best bet will be to strengthen the instruments of governance so that they carry clout even in timorous hands. The good news is that Afghanistan's leaders, who desperately need American arms and aid, can't afford to be obstinate.

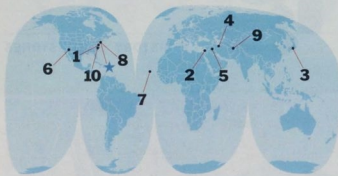
American politicians have a tendency to attach too much hope to elections as a salvation for long-oppressed peoples. But we've learned in Iraq that a vote can't deliver citizens from harm if it doesn't also deliver good government. Getting the winners of Afghanistan's election to rule well will be the Obama Administration's main challenge.

—BY BOBBY GHOSH



# The World

10 ESSENTIAL STORIES



## 1 | Washington

### The Supreme Court Steps In On the Death Penalty

Troy Davis, a Georgia man sentenced to death in 1991 for the murder of an off-duty cop, has long maintained his innocence.



In the first decision of its kind in nearly 50 years, the U.S. Supreme Court is giving him a chance to prove it. The court ordered a federal judge in Georgia to hear new evidence in the case,

including the fact that seven of nine key witnesses have recanted their original testimony. The ruling highlighted the Justices' divergent views on death-row appeals: "The substantial risk of putting an innocent man to death clearly provides an adequate justification" for a new hearing, wrote John Paul Stevens. "This Court has *never* held," dissented Antonin Scalia, "that the Constitution forbids the execution of a convicted defendant who has had a full and fair trial but is later able to convince a habeas court that he is 'actually' innocent."

## 2 | Israel

### Deceptive DNA

Making one person's DNA appear to have been taken from someone else is so simple, Israeli scientists found, that a biology student could do it. In a startling experiment, the researchers faked DNA using multiple techniques. In one, they replaced the DNA in a blood sample with that of another person, collected from hair or saliva. In another, they drew on DNA profiles in law-enforcement databases to construct a sample without obtaining any real DNA from a person. Their findings may undercut the viability of genetic evidence in the courtroom.



Shoppers at a Tokyo electronics store. Analysts hope Japan's long economic slump is ending

## 3 | Tokyo

### Out of the Woods?

Japanese officials reported some unusual news about the nation's economy: it's growing. Japan posted annualized second-quarter GDP growth of 3.7%, marking its first expansion in more than a year and indicating a possible end to its recession. Along with positive news from Europe, the results fueled hope that a global recovery may be near (though the U.S. continues to lag). They may also cushion the thumping expected for Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party in Aug. 30 elections.

Second-quarter GDP growth (annualized)	France	1.4%
	Germany	1.3%
	Japan	3.7%
	-1% U.S.	

## 4 | Tehran

### A Tap on the Glass Ceiling

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad plans to nominate three female Cabinet members—Iran's first in more than 30 years—in a move widely viewed as an attempt to burnish his image with women amid continuing turmoil over his June re-election. The nominees include two political hard-liners: gynecologist Marzieh Vahid Dastgerdi as Health Minister and Fatemeh Ajarlou as Welfare Minister.

## 5 | Baghdad

### New Violence, New Victims

At least 95 people were killed and nearly 600 wounded in truck-bomb attacks in the Iraqi capital Aug. 19, one of the deadliest days since the U.S. military's withdrawal from urban areas. Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch reports that Iraqi militias have embarked on a campaign of violence and intimidation against homosexuals—torturing and murdering growing numbers of men suspected to be gay. Homosexuality is taboo in Iraq, making pinning down a body count nearly impossible. Human Rights Watch—which gathered its information from interviews with Iraqis, activists, journalists and doctors—estimates that through April, hundreds of men were killed. "Murders are committed with impunity," its report noted, "with corpses dumped in garbage or hung as warnings on the street."

## Numbers:

# 700

Number of Mexico's customs inspectors being replaced, in a bid to reduce graft at the agency

# 1

MILLION

Number of electric cars Germany hopes to put on the road by 2020 as part of a new economic-stimulus campaign





## 6 Phoenix

**THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS** The Secret Service says it's not alarmed, but plenty of other people are. Protesters outside two of President Obama's recent events, in New Hampshire and Arizona, have arrived carrying guns, including a Phoenix man toting a pistol and an AR-15 assault rifle. Carrying visible weapons is legal in both states, and the protesters were not in the high-security zone around the President. But the head of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence called the incidents "craziness," especially amid the combustible debate over health-care reform.

## 7 Africa

### Lost and Found

A Russian-manned, Maltese-flagged freighter, which vanished last month after a reported hijacking in the Baltic Sea, was recovered along the west coast of Africa on Aug. 17 by Russian officials. If confirmed, the hijacking of the *Arctic Sea* would be the first act of piracy in European waters since the 17th century.



## 8 New Jersey

### Hacker Caught

Albert Gonzalez, a 28-year-old hacker, was indicted on Aug. 17, along with two Russian co-conspirators, in what is believed to be the largest retail-store theft in U.S. history. Gonzalez, who had been arrested on similar charges before, allegedly cracked the databases of 7-Eleven, two other retail chains and a New Jersey-based credit-card-processing company to steal some 130 million credit-card numbers.

## 9 Kabul

### A Vital, Violent Election

A series of shootings and suicide attacks in Kabul during the run-up to Afghanistan's landmark Aug. 20 presidential election killed at least 15 people before the polls even opened. The violence, combined with the Taliban's threat to amputate the ink-marked fingers of anyone caught voting, was part of the militant group's effort to keep Afghans away from the polls, tainting the legitimacy of the election. If a runoff between the top two candidates is necessary, the final outcome may be delayed.

## 10 North Carolina

### Cheers, Dad

Binge drinking isn't just for college students anymore. A recent Duke University study found that 23% of men and 9% of women over 50 have more than five drinks in one sitting at least once a month—a level of consumption that researchers warn can pose serious health risks. Those who overindulged, the study found, were often coping with such problems as unemployment, divorce and prescription-drug abuse.

## ★ Who They're Questioning in New Jersey:

Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan says he is cutting back on trips to the U.S. after officials pulled him from a security line at Newark Liberty International Airport and questioned him for more than an hour. The incident, which prompted widespread protests in India, occurred as the Muslim actor was traveling to promote *My Name Is Khan*, a movie about post-9/11 racial profiling.



90%

Percentage of U.S. \$1 bills that bear trace amounts of cocaine, according to a new study. Bills from Washington D.C. carry the most; those from Salt Lake City have the least

78 YEARS

Average life expectancy in the U.S.—a new high. Americans born in 2007 can expect to live three months longer than those born in 2006

# Spotlight

## A Mission to Burma



**Imprisoned icon** An activist's poster calls for Suu Kyi's release

### Sanctions

**U.S.**  
Imposed trade restrictions in 1988 and strengthened them in 2003 to ban all imports

**EUROPEAN UNION**  
Banned arms sales and nonhumanitarian aid in 1996; froze overseas assets in 2007

**CANADA**  
Barred imports in 2007

**AUSTRALIA**  
Has banned visas for military leaders since 1988

**I**N ADDITION TO REPRESENTING THE STATE OF Virginia, U.S. Senator Jim Webb has penned novels featuring swashbuckling Americans seeking adventure in exotic backwaters. But even he might not have imagined a scenario in which a U.S. military aircraft flies him to the heavily fortified Burmese capital, Naypyidaw, to meet the country's reclusive military leader and secure the release of an American prisoner.

Burma may not be a charter member of the "axis of evil," but it surely deserves a dishonorable mention. Controlled by a clutch of generals since 1962, the country has devolved from Asia's breadbasket to an economic basket case, known for its brutal repression of ethnic minorities, imprisonment of human-rights activists and, most recently, rumored attempts to develop nuclear capabilities with the assistance of North Korea.

For years, the U.S. response to the junta's ironfisted rule has been an arsenal of economic sanctions. But Webb's confab with junta head General Than Shwe, though not an official visit, may signal a shift in U.S. policy. Earlier this year, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton acknowledged that U.S. sanctions have

done nothing to moderate the junta's behavior, in part because nations like China and India have poured investment into Burma. After his mission, Webb told reporters, "Isolation is only preventing [Burma] from developing economically and politically."

In addition to becoming the first top-level U.S. politician to meet with Than Shwe, Webb was allowed to see detained Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, a privilege denied to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon when he visited last month. Webb's trip came just days after a military-backed court sentenced Suu Kyi to 18 months of house arrest. The democracy advocate, who has been locked up for 14 of the past 20 years, was punished in a bizarre case in which an American swam uninited to her lakeside villa. The verdict virtually guarantees that Suu Kyi, whose National League for Democracy overwhelmingly won the 1990 elections

that the junta ignored, will have to sit out the nationwide polls that the regime has promised for next year.

Some exiled Burmese dissidents have criticized Webb for lending legitimacy to the generals. But Webb did, at

least, extract one concession from the junta. When the Senator's plane left Burma on Aug. 16, it carried an extra occupant: John Yettaw, the American sentenced to seven years' imprisonment with hard labor for his midnight swim to Suu Kyi's home. His saga—that of a middle-aged Mormon from Missouri who used homemade flippers to visit the world's most famous political prisoner—is stranger than any fiction, even that of Senator Jim Webb. —BY HANNAH BEECH

**14**  
Number of years out of the past 20 that Suu Kyi has spent detained by the junta

### Trade

<b>Imports</b> \$3.6 billion	<b>Exports</b> \$6.1 billion
<b>Products</b> Fabric, energy, machinery, construction materials	Natural gas, wood products, agriculture
<b>Trade partners</b> China, Singapore, Thailand	China, India, Thailand

SOURCE: CIA WORLD FACTBOOK, 2008 ESTIMATES



*'It will be impossible for the rest of the world to believe [next year's] elections were free and fair if she was not released.'*  
—Senator Jim Webb on Suu Kyi





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# Verbatim

'No one can follow the details in a country like Sudan.'

**OMAR HASSAN AL-BASHIR**, the nation's President, saying the country's size prevents him from being able to keep tabs on everything. Bashir, who was indicted by the International Criminal Court in March, has thus far eluded prosecution

'I know some people will see the irony here.'

**RODNEY KING**, whose beating by Los Angeles policemen sparked the city's 1992 riots, on his plan to box a former police officer in a paid bout on Sept. 12

'What is sexist about two women in evening gowns?'

**VERA LENGSELD**, German parliamentary candidate, who drew criticism for featuring cleavage-revealing photos of herself and Chancellor Angela Merkel on campaign posters

'Conservatives can have fun too.'

**TOM DELAY**, indicted former Republican House majority leader, after announcing that he will appear in the upcoming season of *Dancing with the Stars*

'Ma'am, trying to have a conversation with you would be like trying to argue with a dining-room table. I have no interest in doing it.'

**BARNEY FRANK**, Democratic Congressman, responding to a Massachusetts woman who asked at a town-hall meeting on health-care reform why Frank supports what she dubbed a "Nazi policy"

'We won't be correcting the atlas.'

**DANIEL GUTHNECHT**, topographer, on the agreement between Switzerland and Italy to shift their border 150 m into Italian territory because melting alpine glaciers have moved the watershed used to demarcate the two countries

'Now that I've interviewed you, would you like to become my homeboy?'

**DAMON WEAVER**, an 11-year-old journalist from Pahokee, Fla., asking President Barack Obama a final question during their Aug. 13 interview at the White House



## BACK & FORTH

### Health Care

'Called Senator Grassley to tell him to stop spreading [sic] myths about health care reform and imaginary "death panels."'

**SENATOR ARLEN SPECTER**,

Democrat, in a Twitter post about Republican Senator Charles Grassley's fear that President Obama's health-care plan would enable the government to decide "when to pull the plug on grandma"

'Specter got it all wrong that I ever used words "death boards." Even liberal press never accused me of that. So change ur last Tweet Arlen.'

**GRASSLEY**, tweeting his response to Specter

### Advertising

'I think he was somewhat of a zealot. I don't have a problem with him pushing an agenda; it's the way he did it.'

**MIKE THOMAS**, a doughnut-shop owner in Bay County, Florida, criticizing Dr. Jason Newsom's antiobesity campaign's slogan AMERICA DIES ON DUNKIN'

'I have never been known for my subtlety.'

**NEWSOM**, who was forced to resign as the county's health-department director over the ads

## LEXICON

**Mindset List n.**—Beloit College's annual compendium of facts and trends that reflect the cultural outlook of the incoming college freshmen class

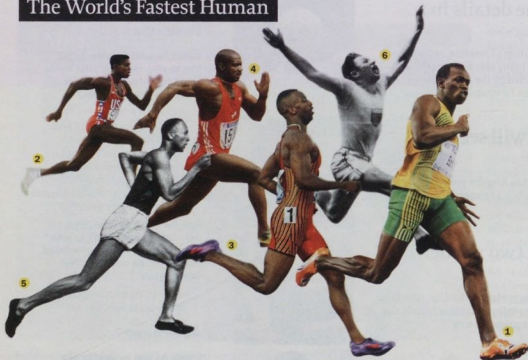
**USAGE:** "This year's **Mindset List** indicates that salsa has been more popular than ketchup for at least 18 years."

—Morning News, Aug. 19, 2009



# Brief History

## The World's Fastest Human



**I**F YOU BLINKED, YOU MAY HAVE MISSED HIM. ON AUG. 16 IN Berlin, Usain Bolt shocked the world by running the 100-m dash in 9.58 sec.—eclipsing his own world record by more than a tenth of a second. The time cemented the lanky Jamaican's spot in sprinting lore and tightened his grip on one of the most fabled honorifics in sports: the world's fastest human.

Fewer than 20 men have staked claim to the title since Donald Lippincott, a University of Pennsylvania undergrad, first earned the honor with a 10.6-sec. time in the 100 m at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics. If Lippincott was an unlikely trailblazer, the next record breaker, Charley Paddock, was an eccentric one, known as much for his prerace cocktail of sherry and raw egg as for his 10.4 speed. His mark, set in 1921, stood until 1930. Six years later, at the Berlin Olympics, Jesse Owens—a Cleveland native who once outraced a horse—earned four gold medals under Adolf Hitler's scornful gaze at the same stadium where Bolt would run seven decades later. Owens went on to pass the torch to speedsters like Bob (Bullet) Hayes, who parlayed his wheels into a career with the Dallas Cowboys, and two-time world's fastest human Carl Lewis.

Shaving fractions of a second off a speed at which humans aren't built to go isn't easy, and some have buckled under the pressure. In recent years, world-record holders Ben Johnson, Tim Montgomery and Justin Gatlin have had their titles stripped after becoming embroiled in steroid scandals. But in Bolt, a telegenic 23-year-old who attributed his gold medal in Beijing to a diet of chicken nuggets, track may have found its freakishly fast savior—one who claims he can go even faster. This time, he has few doubters. "If he says 9.4," an observer responded, "it's probably on." —BY ALEX ALTMAN

### THE FLEET FEW

- Usain Bolt**  
The Jamaican sprinter also owns the 200-m mark: 19.30 sec.
- Carl Lewis**  
A nine-time gold medalist, he set 100-m world records by running a 9.92 in 1988 and a 9.86 in 1991.
- Michael Johnson**  
The gold-shoed speedster ran a scorching 19.32 in the 200-m dash in 1996, spurring some to tout him as the world's fastest human.
- Ben Johnson**  
He ran a 9.79 at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul but had his record erased after a positive steroid test tainted the sport.
- Jesse Owens**  
In addition to his speed titles, he held the long-jump record for 25 years.
- Charley Paddock**  
A 100-m gold medalist at the 1920 Olympics, he also held the 200-m record from 1921 to 1926.

### THE SKIMMER



### The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care

By T.R. Reid;  
Penguin; 288 pages

THE U.S. HEALTH-CARE system is in a remedial class by itself. In no other industrialized country do 20,000 people die each year because they can't afford to see a doctor; nowhere else do 700,000 a year go bankrupt because of their medical bills. When it comes to health-care policy, an economist tells T.R. Reid, the U.S. is the "bogyman of the world." The question Reid poses, however, isn't, What are we doing wrong? It's, What are other countries doing right—and how can the U.S. learn from them? A Washington Post correspondent with a nagging shoulder injury from his Navy days, Reid traveled the world to see how other countries' health-care systems would treat him. From Germany to Canada to Taiwan, he finds several different models for success, all with one thing in common. When considering whether a government has a moral obligation to provide access to health care for all its citizens, Reid notes, "every developed country except the United States has reached the same conclusion."

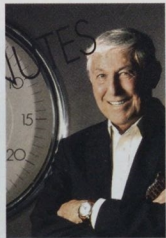
—BY TIM MORRISON

READ

SKIM

TOSS

# Milestones



## Don Hewitt

IT'S BEEN A SAD SUMMER FOR CBS News, and yet one that's reminded the world of how that network helped tell the story of the 20th century. Walter Cronkite, who passed away in July, was America's anchor. But it was TV-news pioneer Don Hewitt, creator of news-magazine colossus *60 Minutes*,

who is credited with coining the term. For nearly six decades, Hewitt, who died on Aug. 19 of pancreatic cancer at age 86, helped invent and refine the medium.

A former war correspondent and Associated Press editor, Hewitt joined CBS in 1948, rising to produce the network's first evening newscast. In 1960 he produced the seminal Nixon-Kennedy presidential debate, which cemented TV as both an imagemaker and a kingmaker. As Hewitt later recalled, he advised Richard Nixon to wear makeup; Nixon refused, and his sweaty pallor contributed to his narrow loss.

On *60 Minutes*, launched in 1968, Hewitt adapted the narrative form of TV entertainment to news coverage. A blunt, visually oriented newsman, Hewitt

had a visceral style that turned the show's mix of investigative journalism, entertainment profiles and commentary into top-20 ratings material.

Ironically, by becoming a hit, *60 Minutes* ended up helping establish news shows as network profit centers—a trend Hewitt would later decry. His record was not spotless; the 1999 movie *The Insider* documented how *60 Minutes* (which he led until 2004) was pressured into backing off from a whistle-blower investigation of the tobacco industry.

But after four decades, *60 Minutes* remains a hit—no small feat at a time when broadcast-news ratings have

steadily slipped. Decades after Hewitt asked Mike Wallace and company to “tell me a story,” his legacy keeps on ticking. —BY JAMES PONIEWOZIK



## Kim Dae Jung

HE WAS NOT THE FATHER OF democracy in South Korea, but he was its consolidator. Before being elected President in 1997, Kim Dae Jung, who died on Aug. 18 at age 85, was the country's most active and prominent dissident in an era when South Korea was effectively ruled by its military.

Kim nearly upset then Pres-

ident Park Chung Hee in 1971, prompting Park to amend the constitution and turn South Korea into a one-party police state. Two years later, government agents kidnapped and apparently planned to kill Kim, before the U.S. government intervened.

On his fourth try,

Kim finally won the presidency, serving from 1998 to 2003. He inherited economic turmoil but engineered a turnaround by privatizing state-owned companies and jump-starting South Korea's IT sector.

In 2000, Kim traveled to North Korea for a summit with Kim Jong Il (below, right)—the first meeting of the two states since the war. It came as part of Kim's so-called sunshine policy, which touted engagement with Pyongyang as a way to persuade the North to abandon its nuclear-weapons program. The stance infuriated South

Korean conservatives and clashed with that of incoming U.S. President George W. Bush. But later that year, the sunshine policy earned Kim the Nobel Peace Prize. —BY BILL POWELL AND STEPHEN KIM



## Les Paul

In the 1950s, Les Paul and his wife Mary Ford scored 16 Top 10 hits with his perky guitar virtuosity and her caressing vocals. But Paul was also a crucial innovator. Virtually every rock guitarist stole licks from him and played them on his invention, the Les Paul Gibson. A trailblazing producer of electric sound, he pioneered overdubbing and multitrack recording. Les was more. —BY RICHARD CORLISS

## Robert Novak

I first talked to Robert Novak 25 years ago, when I was a newly hired staffer at the Republican National Committee. After introducing himself, he handed down Novak rule No. 1. “In my world, you have a choice,” he said. “You can be either a source or a target.” I gulped and wisely chose the former. Thus began a lengthy friendship. Novak, who died of brain cancer on Aug. 18 at age 78, loved to dish. But he also pushed me to look around corners at what was really happening. He was a factor in Washington for nearly 50 years, first as a reporter for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, then as a columnist. The pundit could be a grouch on camera, but in private he was far kinder. He made me smarter in dozens of ways. —BY SCOTT W. REED

Reed, a Washington consultant, ran Bob Dole's 1996 presidential campaign







Joe

# Klein

## Just Say No. The irrational attacks on health-care reform show what the GOP has become: a party of nihilists

IN ONE OF THOSE AWFUL COLLISIONS between public policy and real life, I was in the midst of an awkward conversation about end-of-life issues with my father when Sarah Palin raised the remarkable idea that the Obama Administration's attempt to include such issues in its health-care reform proposal would lead to "death panels." Let me tell you something about my family situation, a common one these days, in order to illuminate the obscenity of Palin's formulation and the cowardice of those, like Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa, the lead Republican negotiator on the Senate Finance Committee, who have refused to contest her claim.

Both my parents are 89 years old. They have been inseparable, with the exception of my father's service in World War II, since kindergarten. My mother has lost her sight and is quite frail. My father takes care of her and my aunt Rose, lovingly, with some—but not enough—private help at their home in central Pennsylvania. One night in early August, I had a terrible scare. I called home and Aunt Rose was freaking out; she didn't know where my father was. All the worst possibilities crossed my mind—it turned out he was just getting the mail—as well as a very difficult reality: if he'd had a stroke, I would have had no idea about what he'd want me to do. I had lunch with him the next day to discuss this.

It wasn't easy. My dad is very proud and independent. He didn't really want to talk about what came next. He was pretty sure, but not certain, that he'd signed a living will. He was very reluctant to sign an enduring power of attorney to empower me, or my brother, to make decisions

about his care and my mom's if he were incapacitated. I tried to convince him that it was important to make some plans, but I didn't have the strategic experience that a professional would have—and, in his eyes, I didn't have the standing. I may be a grandfather myself, but I'm still just a kid in my dad's mind. Clearly, an independent, professional authority figure was needed. And this is what the "death panels" are all about: making end-of-life counseling free and available through Medicare. (I'd make it mandatory, based on recent experience, but hey, I'm not entirely clearheaded on the subject right now.)

Given the heinous dust that's been raised, it seems likely that end-of-life counseling will be dropped from the health-reform legislation. But that's a small point, compared with the larger issue that has clouded this summer: How can you sustain a democracy if one of the two major political parties has been overrun by nihilists? And another question: How can you maintain the illusion of journalistic impartiality when one of the political parties has jumped the shark?

**I'm not going to try. I've written countless "Democrats in Disarray" stories over the years and been critical of the left on numerous issues in the past. This year, the liberal insistence on a marginally relevant public option has been a tactical mistake that has enabled the right's "government takeover" disinformation jihad. There have been times when Democrats have run demagogic scare campaigns on issues like Social Security and Medicare. There are more than a few Democrats who believe, in practice, that government should be run for the benefit of government employees' unions. There are Democrats who are so solicitous of civil liberties that they would undermine legitimate covert intelligence collection. There are others who mistrust the use of military power under almost any circumstances. But these are policy differences, matters of substance. The most liberal members of the Democratic**

caucus—Senator Russ Feingold in the Senate, Representative Dennis Kucinich in the House, to name two—are honorable public servants who make their arguments based on facts. They don't retail outright lies. Hyperbole and distortion certainly exist on the left, but they are a minor chord in the Democratic Party.

It is a very different story among Republicans. To be sure, there are honorable conservatives, trying to do the right thing. There is a legitimate, if wildly improbable, fear that Obama's plan will start a process that will end with a health-care system entirely controlled by the government. There are conservatives—Senator Lamar Alexander, Representative Mike Pence, among many others—who make their arguments based on facts. But they have been overwhelmed by nihilists and hypocrites more interested in destroying the opposition and gaining power than in the public weal. The philosophically supple



**Conservatives interested in the public weal have been overwhelmed by those who just want to destroy their opponents**



party that existed as recently as George H.W. Bush's presidency has been obliterated. The party's putative intellectuals—people like the *Weekly Standard's* William Kristol—are prosaic tacticians who make precious few substantive arguments but oppose health-care reform mostly because passage would help Barack Obama's political prospects. In 1993, when the Clintons tried health-care reform, the Republican John Chafee offered a creative (in fact, superior) alternative—which Kristol quashed with his famous “Don’t Help Clinton” fax to the troops. There is no Republican health-care alternative in 2009. The same people who rail against a government takeover of health care tried to enforce a government takeover of Terri Schiavo's end-of-life decisions. And when Palin floated the “death panel” canard, the number of prominent Republicans who rose up to call her out could be counted on one hand.

A striking example of the prevailing cravenness was Senator Johnny Isakson of Georgia, who has authored end-of-life counseling provisions and told the *Washington Post* that comparing such counseling to euthanasia was nuts—but then quickly retreated when he realized that he had sided with the reality-based community against his Rush Limbaugh–led party. Mitt Romney, the Republican front-runner for President according to most polls, actually created a universal health-care plan in Massachusetts that looks very much like the proposed Obamacare, but he spends much of his time trying to fudge the similarities and was AWOL on the “death panels.” Why are these men so reluctant to be rational in public?

**An argument can be made that this is nothing new.** Dwight Eisenhower tiptoed around Joe McCarthy. Obama reminded an audience in Colorado that

opponents of Social Security in the 1930s “said that everybody was going to have to wear dog tags and that this was a plot for the government to keep track of everybody ... These struggles have always boiled down to a contest between hope and fear.” True enough. There was McCarthyism in the 1950s, the John Birch Society in the 1960s. But there was a difference in those times: the crazies were a faction—often a powerful faction—of the Republican Party, but they didn’t run it. The neofascist Father Coughlin had a huge radio audience in the 1930s, but he didn’t have the power to control and silence the elected leaders of the party that Limbaugh—who, if not the party’s leader, is certainly the most powerful Republican extant—does now. Until recently, the Republican Party contained a strong moderate wing. It was a Republican, the lawyer Joseph Welch, who delivered the coup de grâce to Senator McCarthy when he said, “Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last?” Where is the Republican who would dare say that to Rush Limbaugh, who has compared the President of the United States to Adolf Hitler?

This is a difficult situation for the President. Cynicism about government is always easy, even if it now seems apparent that it was government action—by both Obama and, yes, George W. Bush—that prevented a reprise of the Great Depression. I watched Obama as he traveled the Rocky Mountain West, holding health-care forums, trying to lance the boil by eliciting questions from the irrational minority that had pulverized the public forums held by lesser pols. He would search the crowds for a first-class nutter who might challenge him on “death panels,” but he was constantly disappointed. In Colorado, he locked in on an angry-looking fellow in a teal T-shirt—but the guy’s fury was directed at the right-wing disinformation campaign. Obama seemed to sag. He had to bring up the “death panels” himself.

This may tell us something about the actual state of play on health care: the nutters are a tiny minority; the Republicans are curling themselves into a tight, white, extremist bubble—but there may be enough of them raising dust to render creative public policy impossible. Some righteous anger seems called for, but that’s not Obama’s style. He will have to come up with something, though—and he will have to do it without the tiniest scintilla of help from the Republican Party. ■

# The Rage over Goldman Sachs

CEO Lloyd Blankfein has a great backstory. But it's lost in the noise over his firm's lopsided earnings—and its outsize bonuses—as the rest of the country struggles. Is Goldman a paragon of Wall Street smarts or a showcase of its greed?

BY WILLIAM D. COHAN

**L**LOYD BLANKFEIN, THE 54-YEAR-old chairman and CEO of Goldman Sachs, is powerfully perplexed. In the past six months, his investment-banking and securities-trading firm has roared ahead in profitability by taking risks—that other firms would not—for itself and its clients in an edgy market. It has paid back the billions of dollars, and then some, of taxpayer money the government forced it to take last October; raised billions of dollars in capital from private investors, including \$5 billion from Warren Buffett; and urged its cadre of well-paid and high-performing executives to show some restraint on the conspicuous consumption front.

For this, the level of resentment and ire directed at Goldman—from Congress, from competitors, from the media, from the public—has never been higher. Blankfein, only the 11th leader of the 140-year-old firm, is having a tough time understanding why.

A recent story in *Rolling Stone*, of all places, in which the author described Goldman as a “great vampire squid wrapped around the face of humanity,” has been particularly troubling to him. “Oddly enough, the *Rolling Stone* article tapped into something,” he says in an interview. “I saw it as gonzo, over-the-top writing that some people might find fun to read. I was shocked that others saw it as being supporting evidence that Goldman Sachs had

burned down the Reichstag, shot the Archduke Ferdinand and fired on Fort Sumter.” Suddenly a firm that few Americans know or understand has become part of the zeitgeist, the symbol of irresponsible Wall Street excess, the recovery from which has pushed the nation's treasury to the brink.

It's an odd contradiction: an excellent company being reviled in a country that embraces the profit motive. And without question, Goldman Sachs under Blankfein has recalibrated, in very large numbers, its place as Wall Street's most astute, most opaque and most influential firm. In the first and second quarters of 2009, the company earned \$5.3 billion in net income, the most profitable six-month stretch in Goldman's history. Goldman's stock has more than tripled since its low last November, to more than \$160 per share.

The U.S. unemployment rate has risen too, nearing 10%. In stark contrast, Goldman Sachs has set aside some \$11.36 billion

so far in 2009 in total compensation and benefits for its 29,400 employees. That's about on pace with the record payout the firm made in 2007, at the height of the bubble. Thanks to Andrew Cuomo, the New York State attorney general, we know that in 2008, while Goldman earned \$2.3 billion for the year, it paid out \$4.82 billion in bonuses, giving 953 employees at least \$1 million each and 78 executives \$5 million or more (although Goldman's top five officers, including Blankfein, declined a bonus).

Goldman's riches have deflected the spotlight from what should be great story fodder: Blankfein's personal journey from one of New York City's poorest neighborhoods to its most elite investment bank—and his astounding rise within Goldman. Instead, he has to explain Goldman's performance—and connections—in the face of the nation's epic financial calamity.

## Friends in High Places

NOT LEAST OF THOSE EXPLANATIONS HAS to do with Blankfein's appearance in the call logs of Henry Paulson, his predecessor as Goldman CEO, who was Treasury Secretary while the financial crisis started to unfold in early 2007 up until January 2009. For

**The Goldman commute** *If the past is prologue, current CEO Blankfein, opposite page, center, could follow former CEOs Rubin, near right, and Paulson to the Treasury Department*

**A firm that few Americans know or understand has become part of the zeitgeist, the symbol of irresponsible Wall Street excess**



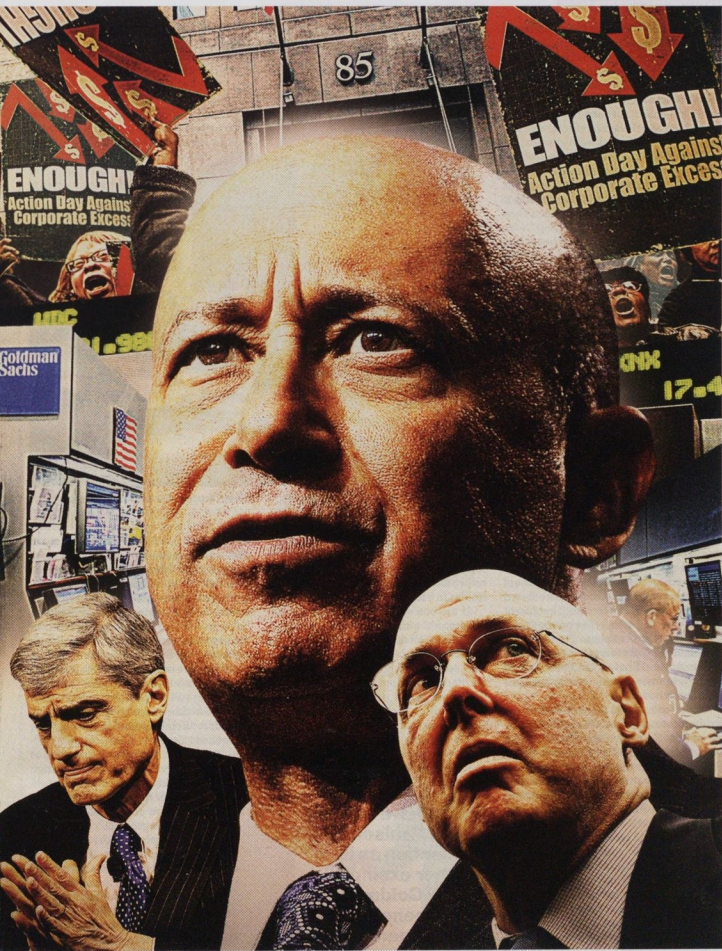


Illustration for TIME by Sean McCabe

instance, the week after Paulson allowed Lehman Brothers to collapse into bankruptcy last Sept. 15—and while the Secretary was playing a major role in deciding whether to pump \$85 billion into the rescue of insurance behemoth AIG—Paulson and Blankfein spoke 24 times. On one level it makes sense: a Treasury official discussing a financial crisis with a trusted expert and industry leader. A mention in a call log is not the same as an actual conversation, Blankfein correctly points out. He recalls only a handful of actual conversations with Paulson or Timothy Geithner, then the president of the New York Fed. “Now, that was AIG week,” he says, “but it was also breaking the buck on [money-market firm] First Reserve week, and it was the week when Lehman’s bankruptcy caused huge problems in the prime brokerage system in London. There were a million things that I would have been talking to Geithner or [Paulson] about.”

The confounding thing, of course, is that after the bailout of AIG, Goldman got \$12.9 billion from AIG in the form of collateral that Goldman already had in its possession and a cash settlement of ongoing margin disputes. "The fact of the matter is, we already had the collateral," Blankfein says. "If AIG had defaulted, guess what—we would have kept the collateral from AIG and from the banks we'd bought protection from. The government's decision to bail out AIG was about the risks to the system. It wasn't about Goldman Sachs."

Still, an AIG default could have been catastrophic for Goldman, although Goldman claims to have been perfectly hedged against an AIG bankruptcy. "If AIG would have gone bankrupt, it would have affected every institution in the world, because it would have had a big effect on the entire financial system," explains David Viniar, Goldman's CFO. He countered, though, that Goldman would have most likely figured out how to make money trading in such a volatile environment.

Nevertheless, critics have feasted on the Paulson connection as just another example of how Goldman Sachs benefits from "Government Sachs"—the propensity of Goldman alums to turn up in top federal financial posts after they leave the firm.

To Blankfein, the criticism seems distorted. "Something that was a virtue now looks like a vice," he says. "I don't think we're going to go far in this country if we make it a bad thing for people to migrate from business into other activities like writing or philanthropy or public service." Goldman, he notes, has already paid back the \$10 billion—plus \$318 million in dividends and an additional \$1.1 billion to buy back warrants (at above-market value, he



**Bailout** Blankfein, far left, and other Wall Street bosses testify before the House in February

adds)—that Paulson forced it to take last October from the \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program. Taxpayers' annualized return on their nine-month investment in Goldman Sachs? A cool 23%.

If anyone shoulders the "blame" for Goldman's golden performance, it is Blankfein. Self-deprecating and seemingly unassuming, the former gold salesman has been ruthlessly ambitious for his firm and its continued success. "He takes it very personally when people act against the firm or show disloyalty," says a former Goldman executive.

After taking the reins of the company when Paulson went to Treasury in July 2006, he accelerated Goldman's transfor-

mation from a firm that depended on its clients for investment-banking revenue—fees generated from advising on deals to underwriting debt and equity securities—to one whose clients are driving a resurgent trading and risk-taking business. Goldman has a tradition of taking trading risks. In the postwar era, the firm's DNA has always combined the interlocking strands represented by two of the world's foremost risk arbitrageurs—first Gus Levy and later Robert Rubin—with the investment-banker pedigree of former senior partners, including Sidney Weinberg, John Weinberg, John Whitehead, Stephen Friedman and Paulson. "We would never let our reputation as the key M&A adviser ebb in favor of being a principal," Blankfein says. "We're very self-conscious that our franchise hinges on our client relationships and the business that those relationships generate."

In an era of derivative-driven innovations and massive leverage, Blankfein is the firm's chief advocate for taking risks but also its chief risk watchdog. He has a far different perspective from that of most of the previous Goldman bosses. In December 2006, Viniar led a meeting of senior Goldman executives to examine ongoing



daily losses in the firm's mortgage portfolio. Goldman had already underwritten and sold billions of dollars' worth of mortgage-backed securities, much of it labeled investment grade by ratings agencies. It was, in fact, junk. But Goldman realized earlier than most that rot was setting in and famously decided to pull back from the mortgage market. The firm then shorted various mortgage-securities indexes—betting that prices would fall—at the very moment that other firms were still making big long bets on the securities. Goldman avoided losses while other firms infected themselves with the cancerous securities.

Blankfein's deftness under pressure impressed his partners. "He is a totally independent-minded guy," says another senior Goldman official. "Ten years ago, I think most people would have said that it is highly unlikely that Lloyd would be CEO and highly unlikely that he would succeed. But he has done both, and it seems like a dream in this environment... It's a bit of a miracle. It was unpredicted."

## A Man and His 'Hood

THEN AGAIN, BLANKFEIN IS DIFFERENT. Born into modest circumstances in the South Bronx, he moved with his family to the East New York section of Brooklyn "in search of a better life," Blankfein says, when he was 3. The family lived in the Linden Houses, a complex of 19 buildings completed in 1957 that contained 1,590 apartments. After losing his job driving a truck, Blankfein's father took a night job sorting mail at the post office—"which in our neck of the woods was considered to be a very good job, because you couldn't lose it," Blankfein says. His mother worked as a receptionist at a burglar-alarm company—"one of the few growth industries in my neighborhood."

Young Blankfein thrived. He stayed out of trouble by not getting off the school bus when he saw things happening that made him uncomfortable. He studied hard. He was the valedictorian of his 1971 graduating class at the predominantly black Thomas Jefferson High School. At 16, he applied to Harvard, solely because Harvard had gone to the school to recruit. Using a combination of financial aid and scholarships, he graduated in 1975. Ben Bernanke was in his class. In the class-of-'75 yearbook, Bernanke was pictured near Blankfein, who was wearing a fashionable houndstooth blazer with groovy wide lapels. Blankfein then enrolled at Harvard Law School, from which he graduated in 1978. "At some point, I can't say that I had a disadvantaged background," he says. "After

## A Brief History: From Goldman to government



**Sidney Weinberg**

*One of FDR's indispensables. The connections he made as a wartime administrator proved invaluable*



**John Whitehead**

*Deputy Secretary of State under Ronald Reagan*



**Joshua Bolten**

*The Goldman exec became George W. Bush's chief of staff*



**Robert Rubin**

*Clinton's Treasury Secretary got credit for easing the financial crisis and criticism for easing regulation*

**Henry Paulson**

*Bush's Treasury Secretary walked into an economic tornado and left with his reputation bruised*



a while, I kind of evolved into having an advantaged background." Following law school, he was hired at Donovan, Leisure as a corporate tax lawyer.

These early triumphs in the face of adversity understandably shaped his ambition and his worldview. "You can never forget that Lloyd came from a pretty significantly challenging environment," explains Robert Steel, Blankfein's former partner at Goldman and an Under Secretary for Paulson at Treasury. "That's at the root of Lloyd." Steel recalls that Blankfein shared stories about life at Thomas Jefferson High School. "You survive by either one of two things," Steel says Blankfein told him. "You were either a great athlete or funny and entertaining, and I decided to go with funny and entertaining."

Blankfein also developed some pretty bad habits. Once upon a time, he smoked two to three packs of cigarettes a day. He was overweight. He often dressed inappropriately or ostentatiously. And he had a love of gambling in Las Vegas.

By 1981, Blankfein was on partner track at Donovan, but then he had what he calls a pre-midlife crisis and decided to make the switch, if he could, to investment banking. He applied for banking jobs at Dean Witter, Morgan Stanley and Goldman. He did not make the cut in Goldman's famously exhaustive recruitment process (or at the other two firms either). "It wasn't a nutty decision. I was a lawyer," he says. "I didn't have a finance background." Instead, in 1982 he landed a job as a gold salesman for J. Aron & Co., an obscure commodities firm that Goldman had purchased in November 1981 for about \$100 million. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, when Blankfein told his then fiancée Laura—now his wife and the mother of their three children, one of whom is at Harvard—that he was leaving law for J. Aron, she cried, thinking that he was burning a high-paying career. (Ironically, Donovan, Leisure closed its doors a decade ago.)

Over time, Blankfein became a major part of J. Aron's success. But at first, he says, he was not very good at the job. "I had trouble with the language, with the speed and the pacing." Soon enough, though, he designed a lucrative \$100 million trade—then the largest of its kind Goldman had ever handled—for a Muslim client to comply with the religion's rules against receiving interest payments. In 1984, Goldman partner and J. Aron chief Mark Winkelman put Blankfein in charge of a group of foreign-exchange salesmen and later in charge of all foreign-exchange business. Rubin, then on the firm's management

committee and responsible for both risk arbitrage and J. Aron, had advised Winkelman against it. According to Charles Ellis' 2008 book about Goldman, *The Partnership*, Rubin told him, "We've never seen it work to put salespeople in charge of trading in other areas of the firm. Are you pretty sure of your analysis?"

Blankfein's career took off. He seemed to have a sixth sense about when to push traders to take more risk and when to take their collective feet off the accelerator. "It's not about hanging on to a predisposition," Blankfein told *FORTUNE* in March 2008. "The best traders are not right more than they are wrong. They are quick adjusters. They are better at getting right when they are wrong." Blankfein too was becoming a quick adjuster.

In 1994, in the wake of Winkelman's departure from the firm after he'd been passed over for the top job at Goldman in favor of Jon Corzine (now governor of New Jersey), Blankfein was selected to run J. Aron. His appetite for risk quickly surfaced. In 1995 he chided his fellow partners for being too risk-averse and promptly left a conference room where they were meeting to place a multimillion-dollar bet with the firm's money that the dollar would rise against the yen. Blankfein's bet—one of his favorites—paid off, and he impressed his partners as a prudent risk taker. He would do the same thing—exhort them to take greater risks—10 years later and then persuade them to reverse course after December 2006.

In December 2003 he was named Goldman's chief operating officer and co-president after the departure of John Thain—Blankfein's rival to lead the firm—who left to become CEO of the New York Stock Exchange. By then, Blankfein had impressed Goldman's board of directors and especially Paulson, then the CEO, with his tenacity, ambition and hands-on management style. "Hank became increasingly concerned about whether [John] Thornton or Thain—the co-presidents of Goldman before Blankfein—"would assume responsibility for the business units and show they could run things," says a former Goldman partner. "Lloyd showed a willingness to assume responsibility." Paulson and Blankfein became an effective team, with Paulson globetrotting and hobnobbing with clients and Blankfein assuming more and more operational control of the firm. Year after year, the company was earning billions. "Lloyd made everything run," says the former partner.

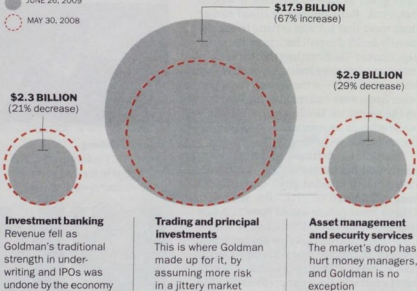
## Defending Goldman's Crown

WHEN, IN JULY 2006, PRESIDENT BUSH tapped Paulson to be Secretary of the Treasury—in the great Goldman

## Place Your Bets. Where Goldman's strategy was right on the money

● JUNE 26, 2009

○ MAY 30, 2008



**Investment banking**  
Revenue fell as Goldman's traditional strength in underwriting and IPOs was undone by the economy

**Trading and principal investments**  
This is where Goldman made up for it, by assuming more risk in a jittery market

**Asset management and security services**  
The market's drop has hurt money managers, and Goldman is no exception

PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN REVENUES, Q1 AND Q2 2008 VS. Q1 AND Q2 2009

tradition—Blankfein's journey from a Brooklyn housing complex to the pinnacle of American capitalism was complete. By then, all of Blankfein's quirky bad habits had been eliminated too. Blankfein has since become a snapper dresser, has lost weight and has given up smoking and gambling. He shaved his once unsightly beard. "I wasn't going to make myself taller," he once quipped when asked about his transformation. He in effect reduced the risks in his personal life as he ratcheted up the risks—prudent, to be sure—that Goldman was taking under his leadership.

He is now exceedingly wealthy. In 2007, the year of Goldman's record profit, the board paid him \$68.5 million, a record payout for a Wall Street CEO. His 3.4 million shares of Goldman are worth about \$540 million. He bought a tony \$27 million Manhattan apartment at "Wall Street's new power address," as the *New York Times* called it, 15 Central Park West. He also owns a 6,500-sq.-ft. (600 sq m) home in Sagaponack, N.Y., near the ocean.

Goldman's CEO and other top execs are set for another huge payday this year, although some of his former partners wonder about the backlash against him and the firm as a result. Blankfein is worried too. How is he to juggle the firm's great success—and the attendant increasing bonus expectations of the high achievers working at the firm—with the inevitable public outcry that will result from paying

out multiple millions of dollars in bonuses at a time when people all over the country are still reeling from a financial calamity largely of Wall Street's making?

Figuring out how to balance the proper ongoing motivation of some of the nation's best and brightest people with the still simmering public anger toward Wall Street—and, at the moment, toward Goldman Sachs in particular—may be Blankfein's biggest management challenge yet. And he knows it. "Everybody's goal in life is to get 105% credit for all the good things they do and much less recognition for all the bad things they do," he says. "But with us, bizarrely, the view seems to be, What's good is bad and what's bad is good. There's clearly some resentment. There are people who are disposed to think that because we were careful and successfully avoided many of the pitfalls, it should be thought of as some kind of conspiracy."

Blankfein is convinced that Goldman Sachs is good for its clients, for the world's capital markets—and yes, for America as well. "I would like for us to be thought of as always doing the right thing and for people at the firm to be confident that they are doing the right thing," he says. Now if only he could get the public to see things this way too, he'd be all set. ■

Cohan, a contributing editor at *FORTUNE*, is the author, most recently, of *House of Cards: A Tale of Hubris and Wretched Excess on Wall Street*



# Obama's Gay Problem

Why the President keeps flip-flopping on the issue of marriage for same-sex couples

ON A SUNNY SATURDAY LAST MONTH, I crashed a fancy brunch on New York's Fire Island at the beachside home of Daniel Cochran and Greg Sutphin, a wealthy gay couple. They served Bloody Marys and a giant spread prepared by a white-coated chef. The brunch, an annual rite, was the 31st to be held in Fire Island's Pines community to raise money for Lambda Legal, the gay movement's litigation arm. At last year's event, cheers went up virtually every time Barack Obama's name was uttered. This time, when Lambda executive director Kevin Cathcart began to review the President's record on gay issues, he was greeted with steely silence.

That silence—because it came from some of the most generous gay political donors in the country—is key to understanding the confusing position the Obama Administration is taking on whether gays and lesbians should enjoy equal marriage rights.

Try to thread this needle: the President has stated his opposition to marriage equality many times. In fact, during his campaign, he pandered to African-American audiences—a group that I'm pretty sure was already for him—by inviting a black singer named Donnie McClurkin to perform at his events; McClurkin believes one's sexuality can be changed by praying to Jesus Christ. And yet Obama has also said he opposes Public Law No. 104-199, 110 Statute 2419, a 1996 bill (signed by President Bill Clinton) that anti-gay forces called the Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA. The law defined marriage as a heterosexual institution for all federal purposes, barring gay couples from fil-

ing joint tax returns and applying for hundreds of government benefits, like Social Security payments for surviving spouses. Obama has said he would like Congress to repeal that law.

Yet—sorry, the contradictions keep coming—once Obama was elected and after a gay couple in California sued in federal court to overturn DOMA, his Administration not only defended the law but defended it in a legal argument so reactionary that it would embarrass Dick Cheney (who, incidentally, is to the

gay community's deep disappointment.

And so on Aug. 17 we got a new legal brief from the Obama Administration in the California case, this one denuded of the execrable incest defense. This time, Obama flip-flops again—back to his campaign position. (It must be dizzying to work in the White House these days.) The Administration now says that it opposes DOMA and wants it overturned—but that tradition dictates that the Administration stand behind the law in court, just as it would argue for any other law so challenged.

Legally speaking, the tradition argument is true, but it's yet another Obama dodge. The Administration could easily decline to defend the anti-gay law on discrimination grounds, just as the Administration of George H.W. Bush declined in 1990 to defend federal laws setting a preference for awarding broadcast licenses to minority-owned businesses. The radical firebrand at the Justice Department who successfully argued against defending those laws? A young attorney named John Roberts, now Chief Justice of the U.S. Clearly, Obama could have refused

to make a case for DOMA if he really wanted to. On her blog, Georgetown law professor Nan Hunter cites other cases in which the Justice Department refused to fight for laws, including one involving a minor cable-TV dispute. As UCLA law professor Eugene Volokh told me, there is nothing in the Constitution or the law that would have prevented the Justice Department from sitting on the sidelines in the DOMA case.

Nothing except politics. Obama's triangulation between left and right has become excruciatingly obvious on this issue, and he's not quite as deft a politician as Clinton at keeping his left flank at bay. I won't be surprised if, next summer at the 32nd Fire Island Pines fundraiser for Lambda, I hear booing when the President's name is mentioned.



**Dashed hope** Signs held aloft at a New York City rally last year protesting California's ban on gay marriage

left of Obama on marriage). In that argument, Obama's lawyers noted that "courts have widely held that certain marriages performed elsewhere need not be given effect, because they conflicted with... public policy." The examples the Justice Department offered: "marriage of uncle to niece," "marriage of 16-year-old," "marriage of first cousins."

That argument—that two consenting adult men marrying isn't unlike a man marrying his niece—led to the silence at that Fire Island brunch. Now Obama, who loves political donations, has begun to worry about his standing among the rich homosexuals who used to fawn over him. As the New York Times's Adam Nagourney first reported, a prominent gay Obama supporter went to the Oval Office in June to express, for 15 full minutes, the

**The Administration could have easily refused to make a case for the so-called Defense of Marriage Act in federal court**





# Back In the Hunt

John Kerry has become something Republicans never imagined and Democrats need: a bipartisan dealmaker

BY JAY NEWTON-SMALL

**O**N A HOT AUGUST AFTERNOON IN 2008, Ted Kennedy took John Kerry sailing on his 50-ft. schooner, the *Mya*. It was a perfect day on the water, sunny with the occasional cotton-ball cloud riding the strong winds over the family compound in Hyannis Port, Mass. With the *Mya*'s blue hull moving at a good clip, Kennedy turned to his old friend with reminiscences of failed campaigns past: Kennedy's bid for the presidency in 1980 and Kerry's in 2004. What concerned Kennedy, who three months earlier had learned he had a malignant brain tumor, was legacy—Kerry's legacy.

"John, you're where I was after I decided I wouldn't run for President," Kennedy said. "You've got the seniority. You've got the network around the country. You've got all the benefits of having campaigned around the country. You've got 20 years ahead of you in the Senate if you want it, and now no one can question your mo-

tives. You can write your own ticket here."

Kerry appears to have taken that advice to heart. Over the past year, the junior Senator from Massachusetts has become the man to see. Health-care talks are stalling? Kerry's got a way to fix the financing. The climate-change bill faces an uphill battle in the Senate? Kerry's leading the negotiations. And as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, he has stepped out overseas—and across the aisle in the Senate—to get things done. In a town where second acts are rare, Kerry, 65, has found a new groove. "I think," Republican Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana says, "at least as I have watched him, he does have a great deal more vigor and enthusiasm."

Not many people would have predicted this. There are some Democrats who will never forgive Kerry for his 2004 loss to George W. Bush, and nearly five years later it is still a sensitive subject for him. "We did pretty damn well against an in-





**Buckling down** Kerry says his unsuccessful 2004 presidential bid deepened his sense of the country

By then it was clear that Kerry's 2004 run left at least one enduring mark on American politics. On the wall of Kerry's office hangs his invitation to President Obama's Inauguration. In the center of the glass is a handwritten note from Obama. It reads, "I'm here because of you." Kerry, of course, had picked Obama to deliver the keynote address at the 2004 Democratic Convention—the speech that launched Obama into superstardom. Kerry decided to endorse Obama in late 2007 and went public in early 2008. After Obama won, Kerry spent several weeks on the short list to be his Secretary of State—a job that ultimately went to Hillary Clinton.

Kerry was disappointed, but he quickly buckled down. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican, had never had much reason to work with Kerry before this year. So he was surprised when Kerry approached him in the Senate about a month ago. "He came over to me, and he said he'd like to see if we could find some middle ground on global warming," Graham recalls. With California Senator Barbara Boxer, Kerry has been gathering Senators from both sides of the aisle for weekly meetings on climate-change legislation. The bill was thought to be a nonstarter in the Senate; Kerry is now confident he can produce a bipartisan agreement by late September. "I think he's got a very practical approach," Graham says.

Kerry has also emerged as a problem solver on health care. The Obama Administration had rejected Senate Finance Committee chairman Max Baucus' idea to tax some health-care benefits because it would raise taxes on the middle class. When Baucus' panel came up \$320 billion short of paying for its proposed reforms, Kerry suggested taxing insurers that offer high-end plans—those worth more than \$9,000 a year for individuals or \$25,000 a year for families—in order to raise \$145 billion. It was an idea that he and then New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley, among others, had pioneered in 1994. When Kerry dusted it off this summer, unions balked, since many of their plans are worth as much as \$25,000 a year. He convened some of the more vocal opponents last month. "I'm doing what Teddy Kennedy would do... I'm finding a compromise to get a bill passed," he told the group. Kerry didn't win them over, but they did pledge not to oppose the proposal.

But it is as Foreign Relations chairman that Kerry has become most influential. A relationship with Syrian President Bashar Assad, forged in 2005, helped Kerry play the key role in thawing U.S.-Syrian relations after the White House renewed Bush-era sanctions on Damascus in May. With Lugar, he shepherded a \$1.5 billion nonmilitary-aid package to Pakistan last spring. His support is also vital to Obama's surge strategy in Afghanistan; though he voted to send more troops earlier this year, Kerry now wonders whether the Administration has a clear agenda there. "I'm very concerned about Afghanistan's footprint," he says. "The breadth of challenges that we face there, with police, with governance, corruption, narcotics, tribalism, other kinds of things... may be well beyond the narrower definition the President gave the mission." Kerry plans to hold hearings in the fall, in part to force the White House to clarify its goals.

Never a backslapper in the clubby Senate cloakroom, Kerry has brushed up on his small strokes. He's been hosting quiet dinners in the Georgetown mansion he shares with his wife Teresa. When a Sudanese delegation came to town, Senator Johnny Isakson, a Georgia Republican who has been involved in Darfur issues, got invited to dinner. "I can't recall Senator Kerry and I in the same room hardly before that... He has been solicitous of us participating; I haven't seen any standoffishness."

Even Kerry's family life has been gapping up. His daughter Vanessa is getting married in October, and he has thrown himself rather dramatically into wedding planning, in part because his ex-wife Julia Thorne, Vanessa's mother, died of cancer in 2006. (Walking back to his office from the Senate floor recently, Kerry held forth at length about the coming nuptials and his hopes of persuading his daughter to do a Red Sox bridal-party outing.) Kerry isn't utterly changed, of course. He retains the sometimes aloof bearing that made him a hard sell to some voters in 2004. He still likes to slip away to play classical guitar. But he can also now acknowledge that he has learned from his mistakes. "I know what I'm doing. I guess," Kerry says. "There's nothing like having the experience [of running for President] under your belt to really understand the country and understand politics better." ■

**'He's gotten involved in a number of things this session that, you know, maybe I have not seen in the past.'**

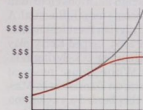
—ORRIN HATCH, REPUBLICAN  
SENATOR FROM UTAH

A  
Health  
Care

## Glossary

The only thing more confusing than the and opponents turn up the volume, TIME in speeches, TV ads, town-hall meetings

[1]



## bending the curve

White House jargon for slowing the growth of health-care spending, which at current rates will exceed 20% of U.S. gross domestic product by 2018.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Both parties agree that the rate of health-care spending is unsustainable. A goal of most reform proposals is to bend, or lower, the growth curve to ease the burden on patients, employers, insurers and, most of all, the government, which relies on tax receipts to cover millions of seniors and poor people.

[2]



## bundling

Giving providers (i.e., doctors and hospitals) fixed bulk payments for taking care of patients rather than charging separately for each service or procedure.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Health economists say bundling could lower overall health-care spending by motivating doctors to focus on preventive medicine instead of encouraging them to perform unnecessary procedures. Some reform proposals would promote payment-bundling.

[3]

## comparative-effectiveness studies

Federally funded research into which medical procedures and treatments are most effective.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Reformers say these studies will lead to better care and save money—provided more-expensive procedures and treatments are found to be no more effective than cheaper ones. Opponents argue that such research is a first step toward rationing because it could take vital decision-making away from doctors and instead give the government the power to determine which treatments will be covered by insurance.



[4]



## defensive medicine

Doctors and hospitals often perform unnecessary tests and procedures on patients to ward off potential malpractice lawsuits. This drives up overall health-care spending. Meanwhile, malpractice insurance can cost doctors hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Many doctors admit they practice defensive medicine but say they have no choice because they are constantly worried about litigation. Tort reform—like capping malpractice awards—could help, but it is not in any of the current proposals. Obama says he knows that defensive medicine is a problem, but he also knows that trial lawyers, who raised millions for him in 2008, oppose tort reform.



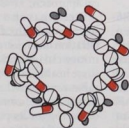
[5]

## doughnut hole

A gap in prescription-drug coverage for Medicare recipients in Part D. Because of the way the law was written, some seniors have no coverage once their drug costs exceed \$2,700 a year, until they have spent \$4,350 out of their own pocket.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Seniors who reach the doughnut hole often cut back on medications or stop taking them altogether, endangering their health. Obama recently made a deal with pharmaceutical companies that would cut the cost of brand-name drugs 50% for seniors subject to the doughnut hole.



[6]

## employer mandate

A requirement that employers provide health insurance to workers or pay a financial penalty.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Most employer-mandate proposals would broaden workplace coverage but exempt some small businesses.

[7]



## end-of-life care

Medical services for people who are in the last stages of life.

## WHY IT MATTERS

More than a quarter of all Medicare funds are spent on people in their final year of life. One controversial reform proposal would reimburse doctors who counsel patients on end-of-life care, helping advise them on how to establish guidelines for the way they want to be cared for when they are dying.

[8]

## guaranteed issue

A proposed rule requiring health insurers to sell coverage to anyone who applies for it.

## WHY IT MATTERS

All reform proposals would make this federal law, reversing the current insurance practice of turning away applicants who, for medical or other reasons, look like bad financial bets.

debate is the vocabulary. As health-insurance reform's backers offers a guide to decoding 15 of the key terms frequently deployed and the blogosphere. —BY KATE PICKERT



## Complete Guide

To learn more about health-care terminology, go to [time.com/healthcaredebate](http://time.com/healthcaredebate)

[9]

## health-insurance cooperative

A self-insured pool of people, some of whom could not otherwise afford insurance, who would collect premiums and pay out claims. These nonprofit co-ops would be consumer-owned and -operated.

**WHY IT MATTERS** The Senate Finance Committee is eyeing the creation of co-ops formed at the state or national level to help the uninsured and underinsured get quality coverage. Some policy experts think co-ops would not be strong enough to pressure insurers to sufficiently lower rates and extend policies to cover the uninsured. Proponents believe co-ops would provide competition to private insurers and operate independently of the government, pacifying critics of the public option.



[10]

## individual mandate

A requirement that every American buy health insurance, which would be enforced through financial penalties.

**WHY IT MATTERS** An individual mandate is a central tenet of some reform proposals because it is the mechanism for universal coverage, a vital step to lowering costs. Insurance companies back this provision in part because it would dramatically increase the number of Americans buying health insurance.

[11]



**pooling** Grouping large numbers of people to spread out their health-insurance risks. The larger and more diverse the pool of people, the cheaper their premiums can be.

**WHY IT MATTERS** Pooling would enable uninsured Americans and small firms that cannot afford insurance to link up in larger groups through a health-insurance exchange regardless of pre-existing conditions. Much of the backroom fighting in Washington is over whether these pools will be mandatory or voluntary, public or private, for-profit or not-for-profit, government-run or merely government-regulated.

[12]

**portability** The right to keep your health-insurance policy with you if you change or lose your job or if you move.

**WHY IT MATTERS** Americans with employer-sponsored health insurance lose their coverage if they leave their job. Although federal law guarantees that people with changed professional circumstances can sign up for new, individual policies, those policies tend to be prohibitively expensive. Most reform proposals would allow Americans who lose or change jobs to stay on their previous employer's insurance.



[13]



## public option

A government-run health-insurance plan that could theoretically offer coverage at a price below that of private insurance plans. Federal leverage could lower administrative costs and reimbursements to doctors and hospitals.

**WHY IT MATTERS** Obama wanted a public option to "keep the insurance companies honest" by giving them competition. But he signaled he was willing to drop the idea. This is a victory for private insurers, who strongly oppose a public option, and many Republicans who believe it would mean a massive federal intrusion in the free market.

[14]

**rescission** Insurance companies' practice of dropping patients after they file expensive claims, on the grounds that applicants misrepresented their medical history when they signed up for coverage.

**WHY IT MATTERS** Rescission has been the target of congressional hearings and would be banned by the reform proposals under consideration. In addition, insurers would no longer be permitted to restrict coverage or charge higher premiums for pre-existing conditions.



[15]

## single-payer

A government-run health-care delivery system for all citizens, paid for by tax dollars. Both Britain and Canada have single-payer.

**WHY IT MATTERS** It doesn't, except in theory. No proposals under serious consideration call for a single-payer plan. Conservatives who fear big government worry that more-modest proposals are a Trojan horse for a federal takeover of health care. Some liberals contend that a government-run system is the fastest way to lower costs and extend coverage to all.





# The Kennedys Of Iran.

## As turmoil spreads, the Supreme Leader taps one family to step in

BY ROBIN WRIGHT



**Ali Larijani, speaker of parliament,** has criticized the handling of the June 12 vote

**Supreme Leader Khamenei** is under fire for the government's crackdown

**T**HE SWEARING-IN OF A NEW CHIEF judge normally receives scant attention in Iran. But the political intrigues spreading throughout the theocracy turned the Aug. 17 ceremony for Sadegh Larijani into a happening dissected across the country and around the world. There was President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, flanked on one side by the new chief judge and on the other by Sadegh's elder brother Ali Larijani, the speaker of parliament. With two of the three government branches now under their control, the Brothers Larijani have become a counterweight to Iran's eccentric President—with the full endorsement of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Often referred to as Iran's equivalent of the Kennedy clan, the five Larijani brothers—all bearded, sandy-haired and bespectacled—have spent the past three decades consolidating their power. They've run for the presidency, won Cabi-

net posts, served on the Council of Guardians and Assembly of Experts, directed state broadcasting, headed the Supreme National Security Council and served as deputy commander of the Revolutionary Guards. Now the Supreme Leader is tapping into their experience and loyalty to prop up the troubled regime, as the focus of public disgruntlement shifts from the disputed June 12 presidential election to Khamenei's powers. "The Supreme Leader is looking for people to support him. He is also looking for balance to Ahmadinejad," says Mohsen Kadivar, an Iranian reform cleric. "There are now two different currents among conservatives: one, Ahmadinejad and the Basij [paramilitary zealots], and the second, like the Larijanis, who are more rational and pragmatic."

After 10 weeks of unrest, criticism of the regime is growing. Dozens of clerics have issued an unsigned 11-page letter, posted on several websites, calling Khamenei a

dictator and demanding his dismissal. A group of ex-lawmakers publicly blamed Khamenei for the postelection turmoil and demanded a public probe by the Assembly of Experts that selected him. And public fury is growing over the alleged rape of detainees as well as the show-trial purges of opposition figures, many of whom once ran Iran's government.

The Larijanis' rise reflects the narrowing of power in Iran. Although the 1979 revolution shed 2,500 years of monarchy, Iranian politics is still often family based.

**The Larijanis reflect a nuanced difference from the hard-line politics of Ahmadinejad**



**President Ahmadinejad** faces opposition to his Cabinet picks



**Chief Judge Sadegh Larijani** and his four brothers have spent 30 years in politics

Ayatullah Mirza Hashem Amoli spent decades in Iraq, where some of his sons were born, and was a "quietist" who took the traditional Shi'ite view that religion and politics should not mix.

The brothers' politics varies. "Javad is more forward-leaning and entrepreneurial in his politics. Ali is the most ambitious, and Sadegh is the craziest," said Suzanne Maloney, a former State Department analyst now at the Brookings Institution's Saban Center. Mohammad Javad was burned politically by published reports about his meeting with a British diplomat in the late 1990s to defuse Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini's fatwa condemning *The Satanic Verses* author Salman Rushdie to death. Educated at the University of California, Mohammad Javad has also expressed a relatively moderate position on relations with the U.S. "We should regard our relations with America realistically and without extremism and weigh them with the criteria of our national interests," he said a decade ago. Sadegh, meanwhile, served on the 12-member Council of Guardians, the powerful body that vets legislation, political candidates and election results. Now, as chief judge, he is expected to oversee the judicial crackdown and trials of opposition figures.

### Realists vs. Hard-Liners

THE LARIJANIS REFLECT A NUANCED BUT significant difference from the hard-line "principle-ist" politics of Ahmadinejad. "Ten years ago, the Larijanis would have been considered arch hard-liners," said Karim Sadjadpour of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "But the spectrum has moved so far right in recent years that now, compared with Ahmadinejad, they appear somewhat moderate."

The differences are both political and personal. Ali Larijani ran for President against Ahmadinejad in 2005; he came in sixth, with less than 6% of the vote. Khamenei then appointed him head of the National Security Council, a body that reports to the Supreme Leader rather than to the President, who has just one seat on the council. As the lead negotiator

on Iran's disputed nuclear program, he took a tough line on the country's right to enrich uranium as part of its energy policy but showed openness to a deal that would prevent the country's further isolation, according to diplomats involved in the talks. That put him at odds with Ahmadinejad's inflammatory rhetoric. He quit in 2007 and then ran for parliament last year.

After the June election protests, Ali Larijani was one of the few officials to acknowledge that many Iranians questioned the results. "The opinion of this majority should be respected, and a line should be drawn between them and rioters and miscreants," he said in comments posted on an Iranian website. He also said government ministers should come to the job with experience. Cabinet nominations require parliamentary approval, and the legislature has previously rejected Ahmadinejad's choices as unqualified. The vote on Cabinet nominations will be the first major test for Ahmadinejad as he begins his second term.

The ill will between Larijani and Ahmadinejad is rooted in a social-class divide. The Larijanis have a religious bloodline enhanced by marriage into prominent clerical families, giving them status beyond politics. Ali Larijani represents Qum—the center of Islamic scholarship in Iran—in parliament. Ahmadinejad, by contrast, is the son of a blacksmith. "The Larijanis are in the privileged class thanks to the revolution, and Ahmadinejad is a self-made man," said Maloney. "When he criticizes patronage and corruption, he's striking at the heart of a system that the Larijanis created and benefited from."

Thus far, however, all the Larijanis have heeded political boundaries. On Aug. 12, Ali Larijani announced that a parliamentary investigation had rejected torture claims made by some arrested during the postelection turmoil. "On the basis of precise and comprehensive investigations conducted about the detainees at Kahrizak and Evin prisons, no cases of rape and sexual abuse were found," he told parliament. Many analysts believe Ali Larijani may be preparing himself to run for the presidency after Ahmadinejad's term ends in 2013. The brothers "are nakedly ambitious. Their overarching principle seems to be to position themselves wherever power lies," said Sadjadpour. "If the Shah were still in power, they'd be [working with] him. And if Iran evolves into a democracy, they'll try and reinvent themselves as progressive democrats." If that happens, Iranians may find themselves with their own version of Camelot in more ways than one. ■

During the reform era of President Mohammad Khatami, his brother Reza was deputy speaker of parliament. His Culture Minister was married to a member of parliament. Former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's daughter Faeezeh was a member of parliament, and his brother was head of the state-controlled radio and television (he was succeeded by a Larijani).

But no family has held as many positions in so many branches of Iran's labyrinthine government as the Larijanis. Mohammad Javad Larijani, a Berkeley-educated mathematician and the eldest, has been a member of parliament, a Deputy Foreign Minister and an adviser to the Supreme Leader; Bagher Larijani, a physician, has served as Deputy Minister of Health; and Fazel Larijani, a diplomat, spent years posted in Ottawa.

Ironically, the Larijani family patriarch was hardly a politico. The late Grand

**He's raised on grass and hay and lives happily on a pasture by the ocean. His meat is free of antibiotics, but can we afford to eat it? We can't afford not to.**





# America's Food Crisis and How to Fix It.

BY BRYAN WALSH

SOMEWHERE IN IOWA, A PIG IS BEING RAISED IN A CONFINED pen, packed in so tightly with other swine that their curly tails have been chopped off so they won't bite one another. To prevent him from getting sick in such close quarters, he is dosed with antibiotics. The waste produced by the pig and his thousands of pen mates on the factory farm where they live goes into manure lagoons that blanket neighboring communities with air pollution and a stomach-churning stench. He's fed on American corn that was grown with the help of government subsidies and millions of tons of chemical fertilizer. When the pig is slaughtered, at about 5 months of age, he'll become sausage or bacon that will sell cheap, feeding an American addiction to meat that has contributed to an obesity epidemic currently afflicting more than two-thirds of the population. And when the rains come, the excess fertilizer that coaxed so much corn from the ground will be washed into the Mississippi River and down into the Gulf of Mexico, where it will help kill fish for miles and miles around. That's the state of your bacon—circa 2009.

**Happy trails** One of more than 100 cattle on Bill Niman's California property, home of an ongoing experiment in sustainable ranching





**Stuffed pigs** On a factory farm, 10,000 or more swine are kept in tight conditions—torture for the animals and risky for us

Horror stories about the food industry have long been with us—ever since 1906, when Upton Sinclair's landmark novel *The Jungle* told some ugly truths about how America produces its meat. In the century that followed, things got much better, and in some ways much worse. The U.S. agricultural industry can now produce unlimited quantities of meat and grains at remarkably cheap prices. But it does so at a high cost to the environment, animals and humans. Those hidden prices are the creeping erosion of our fertile farmland, cages for egg-laying chickens so packed that the birds can't even raise their wings and the scary rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria among farm animals. Add to the price tag the acceleration of global warming—our energy-intensive food system uses 19% of U.S. fossil fuels, more than any other sector of the economy.

And perhaps worst of all, our food is increasingly bad for us, even dangerous. A series of recalls involving contaminated foods this year—including an outbreak of salmonella from tainted peanuts that killed

at least eight people and sickened 600—has consumers rightly worried about the safety of their meals. A food system—from seed to 7-Eleven—that generates cheap, filling food at the literal expense of healthier produce is also a principal cause of America's obesity epidemic. At a time when the nation is close to a civil war over health-care reform, obesity adds \$147 billion a year to our doctor bills. "The way we farm now is destructive of the soil, the environment and us," says Doug Gurian-Sherman, a senior scientist with the food and environment program at the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).

## 'The way we farm now is destructive of the soil, the environment and us.'

—DOUG GURIAN-SHERMAN,  
SENIOR SCIENTIST, FOOD AND  
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM OF THE  
UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS

Some Americans are heeding such warnings and working to transform the way the country eats—ranchers and farmers who are raising sustainable food in ways that don't bankrupt the earth. Documentaries like the scathing *Food Inc.* and the work of investigative journalists like Eric Schlosser and Michael Pollan are re-priming Sinclair's work, awakening a sleeping public to the uncomfortable realities of how we eat. Change is also coming from the very top. First Lady Michelle Obama's White House garden has so far yielded more than 225 lb. of organic produce—and tons of powerful symbolism. But hers is still a losing battle. Despite increasing public awareness, sustainable agriculture, while the fastest-growing sector of the food industry, remains a tiny enterprise: according to the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), less than 1% of American cropland is farmed organically. Sustainable food is also pricier than conventional food and harder to find. And while large companies like General Mills have opened organic divisions,

purists worry that the very definition of *sustainability* will be co-opted as a result.

But we don't have the luxury of philosophizing about food. With the exhaustion of the soil, the impact of global warming and the inevitably rising price of oil—which will affect everything from fertilizer to supermarket electricity bills—our industrial style of food production will end sooner or later. As the developing world grows richer, hundreds of millions of people will want to shift to the same calorie-heavy, protein-rich diet that has made Americans so unhealthy—demand for meat and poultry worldwide is set to rise 25% by 2015—but the earth can no longer deliver. Unless Americans radically rethink the way they grow and consume food, they face a future of eroded farmland, hollowed-out countryside, scarier germs, higher health costs—and bland taste. Sustainable food has an elitist reputation, but each of us depends on the soil, animals and plants—and as every farmer knows, if you don't take care of your land, it can't take care of you.

### The Downside of Cheap

FOR ALL THE GRUMBLING YOU DO ABOUT your weekly grocery bill, the fact is you've never had it so good, at least in terms of what you pay for every calorie you eat. According to the USDA, Americans spend less than 10% of their incomes on food, down from 18% in 1966. Those savings begin with the remarkable success of one crop: corn. Corn is king on the American farm, with production passing 12 billion bu. annually, up from 4 billion bu. as recently as 1970. When we eat a cheeseburger, a Chicken McNugget, or drink soda, we're eating the corn that grows on vast, monocrop fields in Midwestern states like Iowa.

But cheap food is not free food, and corn comes with hidden costs. The crop is heavily fertilized—both with chemicals like nitrogen and with subsidies from Washington. Over the past decade, the Federal Government has poured more than \$50 billion into the corn industry, keeping prices for the crop—at least until corn ethanol skewed the market—artificially low. That's why McDonald's can sell you a Big Mac, fries and a Coke for around \$5—a bargain, given that the meal contains nearly 1,200 calories, more than half the daily recommended requirement for adults. "Taxpayer subsidies basically underwrite cheap grain, and that's what the factory-farming system for meat is entirely dependent on," says Gurian-Sherman.

So what's wrong with cheap food and cheap meat—especially in a world in which more than 1 billion people go hungry? A lot. For one thing, not all food is

## The High Cost of Cheap

Not all calories are priced the same. Thanks in part to skewed subsidies, our food system has made it inexpensive to eat badly

### \$1 can buy



## The Cost: Organic vs. Conventional

The food may look the same, but the price tag doesn't. Is it worth the cost to go green with your groceries?



### Organic

There's no single definition of organic, and labels can be deceiving, but the USDA's certification stickers remain a simple indicator of a food's sustainability. Keep in mind that only the 100%-organic rating means the product is chemical-free

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ORGANIC MILK 1/2 GAL	4.29 F
ORGANIC OAT 1/2 BKT	14.65 F
1.18 lb R 1.79 /lb	
O ORGANIC SWEET MILK	2.11 F
O ORGANIC TOMATO 12/1P	2.99 F
SR ORGANIC EGGS	4.29 F
SR ORGANIC MILK 1/2 GAL	4.99 F
TAX .00 BKT	33.32
<b>PURCHASE \$33.32</b>	

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ANNUAL COST

**\$1,732**



### Conventional

The standards for mainstream agriculture are almost as varied as those for organic, but generally crops can be grown with pesticides, and meat with antibiotics and artificial hormones. Eggs may come from chickens in cramped cages

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1 R 2/5.00	
ORGANIC MILK 1/2 GAL	2.50 F
ORGANIC SWEET SP	5.11 F
1.24 lb R .99 /lb	
SR ORGANIC SWEET 10	1.23 F
1 R 2/4.00	
SR ORGANIC TOMATO 18	2.00 F
SR EGGS	2.19 F
SR ORGANIC MILK 1/2 GAL	2.79 F
TAX .00 BKT	15.88
<b>PURCHASE \$15.88</b>	

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ANNUAL COST

**\$825**

### Is sustainability worth an extra \$900 a year?

There's no firm evidence that organics are more nutritious than conventional food, but they do reduce pesticide exposure. There are also hidden ecological costs to conventional farming. Add those in at the cash register, and the two grocery bills don't look so different



equally inexpensive; fruits and vegetables don't receive the same price supports as grains. A study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that a dollar could buy 1,200 calories of potato chips or 875 calories of soda but just 250 calories of vegetables or 170 calories of fresh fruit. With the backing of the government, farmers are producing more calories—some 500 more per person per day since the 1970s—but too many are unhealthy calories. Given that, it's no surprise we're so fat; it simply costs too much to be thin.

Our expanding girth is just one consequence of mainstream farming. Another is chemicals. No one doubts the power of chemical fertilizer to pull more crop from a field. American farmers now produce an astounding 153 bu. of corn per acre, up from 118 as recently as 1990. But the quantity of that fertilizer is flat-out scary: more than 10 million tons for corn alone—and nearly 23 million for all crops. When runoff from the fields of the Midwest reaches the Gulf of Mexico, it contributes to what's known as a dead zone, a seasonal, approximately 6,000-sq.-mi. area that has almost no oxygen and therefore almost no sea life. Because of the dead zone, the \$2.8 billion Gulf of Mexico fishing industry loses 212,000 metric tons of seafood a year, and around the world, there are nearly 400 similar dead zones. Even as we produce more high-fat, high-calorie foods, we destroy one of our leanest and healthiest sources of protein.

The food industry's degradation of animal life, of course, isn't limited to fish. Though we might still like to imagine our food being raised by Old MacDonald, chances are your burger or your sausage came from what are called concentrated-animal feeding operations (CAFOs), which are every bit as industrial as they sound. In CAFOs, large numbers of animals—1,000 or more in the case of cattle and tens of thousands for chicken and pigs—are kept in close, concentrated conditions and fattened up for slaughter as fast as possible, contributing to efficiencies of scale and thus lower prices. But animals aren't widgets with legs. They're living creatures, and there are consequences to packing them in prison-like conditions. For instance: Where does all that manure go?

Pound for pound, a pig produces approximately four times the amount of waste a human does, and what factory farms do with that mess gets comparatively little oversight. Most hog waste is disposed of in open-air lagoons, which can overflow in heavy rain and contaminate nearby streams and rivers. "This creek that we used to wade in, that creek that our parents could drink out of, our kids can't even

## The Tale of Two Cattle



### Organic (1% of all cattle)

This is the way all beef used to be raised—and how some people still imagine it is. Bill Niman tends a small herd with one of the lightest hands in the business and produces what Bay Area chefs swear is unparalleled beef



### Conventional (99% of all cattle)

The vast majority of all American cattle start off on open ranges, but that's where the similarity to their organic cousins ends. They're shifted after a few months to the tight quarters of an industrial feedlot, to be fattened up as fast as possible

How did your hamburger get to your plate—and what did it eat along the way? The journey of beef illustrates the great American food chain

### LIVING CONDITIONS



play in anymore," says Jayne Clappitt, a farmer in Independence, Iowa, who lives near a number of hog farms.

To stay alive and grow in such conditions, farm animals need pharmaceutical help, which can have further damaging consequences for humans. Overuse of antibiotics on farm animals leads, inevitably, to antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and the same bugs that infect animals can infect us too. The UCS estimates that about 70% of antimicrobial drugs used in America are given not to people but to animals, which means we're breeding more of those deadly organisms every day. The Institute of Medicine estimated in 1998 that antibiotic resistance cost the public-health system \$4 billion to \$5 billion a year—a figure that's almost certainly higher now. "I don't think CAFOs

would be able to function as they do now without the widespread use of antibiotics," says Robert Martin, who was the executive director of the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Animal Production.

The livestock industry argues that estimates of antibiotics in food production are significantly overblown. Resistance "is the result of human use and not related to veterinary use," according to Kristina Butts, the manager of legislative affairs for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. But with wonder drugs losing their effectiveness, it makes sense to preserve them for as long as we can, and that means limiting them to human use as much as possible. "These antibiotics are not given to sick animals," says Representative Louise Slaughter, who is sponsoring a bill to limit

	DIET	SUPPLEMENTS	ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	HUMAN HEALTH
	<b>GRASS</b> Niman's cows eat only grass, along with a smattering of hay. That's the normal diet for cattle. Their rumen, a digestive organ, can break down grasses we'd find inedible	<b>NONE</b> Niman gives no supplements whatsoever to his cattle—no drugs, no hormones, no additives. That's not ironclad for organic beef—some companies might use antimicrobials—but generally the animals are supplement-free	<b>LIVING WITH THE LAND</b> To prevent his ranch from becoming overgrazed, Niman shifts his cattle around the land, ensuring that the grass has time to recover between feedings. The result is a surprisingly low-impact hamburger, since grass doesn't need chemical fertilizer to grow and its presence helps prevent soil erosion. There's no need to clean up manure—with Niman's low cattle density, the waste just fertilizes the land	<b>THE OMEGA EFFECT</b> Beef has a bad rep among nutritionists, but that might be partly unfair for grass-fed steaks. According to research from the University of California, grass-fed beef is higher in beta-carotene, vitamin E and omega-3 fatty acids than conventional beef
	<b>GRASS AND CORN</b> Conventional cattle feed off grass pasture for the first several months, but at the feedlot, they're switched to a heavily corn-based diet, which makes them gain weight faster but also makes them get sick more easily	<b>CHEMICALS</b> In part to help them survive the crowded conditions of feedlots, where infections can spread fast, conventional cattle are given antibiotics in their feed, and sometimes growth hormones, bloods and fats	 <b>WASTE</b> A 1,000-head feedlot produces up to 280 tons of manure a week, and the smell can be powerful. All that feed corn requires millions of tons of fertilizer and, ultimately, a lot of petroleum	 <b>FAT ATTACK</b> Feeding corn to cattle for the last several months of their lives doesn't just get them fatter faster; it also changes the quality of the beef. Corn helps produce that marbled taste many of us love, but it can result in beef that is higher in fat—helping to fuel the obesity epidemic

antibiotic use on farms. "It's a preventive measure because they are kept in pretty unspeakable conditions."

Such a measure would get at a symptom of the problem but not at the source. Just as the burning of fossil fuels that is causing global warming requires more than a tweaking of mileage standards, the manifold problems of our food system require a comprehensive solution. "There should be a recognition that what we are doing is unsustainable," says Martin. And yet, still we must eat. So what can we do?

### Getting It Right

IF A FACTORY FARM IS HELL FOR AN ANIMAL, then Bill Niman's seaside ranch in Bolinas, Calif., an hour north of San Francisco, must be heaven. The property's cliffside view

over the Pacific Ocean is worth millions, but the black Angus cattle that Niman and his wife Nicolette Hahn Niman raise keep their eyes on the ground, chewing contentedly on the pasture. Grass—and a trail of hay that Niman spreads from his truck periodically—is all the animals will eat during the nearly three years they'll spend on the ranch. That all-natural, non-corn diet—along with the intensive, individual care that the Nimans provide their animals—produces beef that many connoisseurs consider to be among the best in the world. But for Niman, there is more at stake than just a good steak. He believes that his way of raising farm animals—in the open air, with no chemicals or drugs and with maximum care—is the only truly sustainable method and could be a

model for a better food system. "What we need in this country is a completely different way of raising animals for food," says Hahn Niman, a former attorney for the environmental group Earthjustice. "This needs to be done in the right way."

The Nimans like to call what they do "beyond organic," and there are some signs that consumers are beginning to catch up. This November, California voters approved a ballot proposition that guarantees farm animals enough space to lie down, stand up and turn around. Worldwide, organic food—a sometimes slippery term but on the whole a practice more sustainable than conventional food—is worth more than \$46 billion. That's still a small slice of the overall food pie, but it's growing, even in a global recession. "There is more pent-up

demand for organic than there is production," says Bill Wolf, a co-founder of the organic-food consultancy Wolf DiMatteo and Associates.

So what will it take for sustainable food production to spread? It's clear that scaling up must begin with a sort of scaling down—a distributed system of many local or regional food producers as opposed to just a few massive ones. Since 1935, consolidation and industrialization have seen the number of U.S. farms decline from 6.8 million to fewer than 2 million—with the average farmer now feeding 129 Americans, compared with 19 people in 1940.

It's that very efficiency that's led to the problems and is in turn spurring a backlash, reflected not just in the growth of farmers' markets or the growing involvement of big corporations in organics but also in the local-food movement, in which restaurants and large catering services buy from suppliers in their areas, thereby improving freshness, supporting small-scale agriculture and reducing the so-called food miles between field and plate. That in turn slashes transportation costs and reduces the industry's carbon footprint.

A transition to more sustainable, smaller-scale production methods could even be possible without a loss in overall yield, as one survey from the University of Michigan suggested, but it would require far more farmworkers than we have today. With unemployment approaching double digits—and things especially grim in impoverished rural areas that have seen populations collapse over the past several decades—that's hardly a bad thing. Work in a CAFO is monotonous and soul-killing, while too many ordinary farmers struggle to make ends meet even as the rest of us pay less for food. Farmers aren't the enemy—and they deserve real help. We've transformed the essential human profession—growing food—into an industry like any other. "We're hurting for job creation, and industrial food has pushed people off the farm," says Hahn Niman. "We need to make farming real employment, because if you do it right, it's enjoyable work."

One model for how the new paradigm could work is Niman Ranch, a larger operation that Bill Niman founded in the 1990s, before he left in 2007. (By his own admission, he's a better farmer than he is a businessman.) The company has knitted together hundreds of small-scale farmers into a network that sells all-natural pork, beef and lamb to retailers and restaurants. In doing so, it leverages economies of scale while letting the farmers take proper care of their land and animals. "We like to think of ourselves as a force for a local-farming community, not as a large corporation,"

JONATHAN SPRAGUE—MEDIA FOR TIME







says Jeff Swain, Niman Ranch's CEO.

Other examples include the Mexican-fast-food chain Chipotle, which now sources its pork from Niman Ranch and gets its other meats and much of its beans from natural and organic sources. It's part of a commitment that Chipotle founder Steve Eells made years ago, not just because sustainable ingredients were better for the planet but because they tasted better too—a philosophy he calls Food with Integrity. It's not cheap for Chipotle—food makes up more than 32% of its costs, the highest in the fast-food industry. But to Eells, the taste more than compensates, and Chipotle's higher prices haven't stopped the company's rapid growth, from 16 stores in 1998 to over 900 today. "We put a lot of energy into finding farmers who are committed to raising better food," says Eells.

Bon Appétit Food Management, a caterer based in Palo Alto, Calif., takes that commitment even further. The company sources as much of its produce as possible from within 150 miles of its kitchens and gets its meat from farmers who eschew antibiotics. Bon Appétit also tries to influence its customers' habits by nudging them toward greener choices. That includes campaigns to reduce food waste, in part by encouraging servers at its kitchens to offer smaller, more manageable portions. (The

USDA estimates that Americans throw out 14% of the food we buy, which means that much of our record-breaking harvests ends up in the garbage.) And Bon Appétit supports a low-carbon diet, one that uses less meat and dairy, since both have a greater carbon footprint than fruit, vegetables and grain. The success of the overall operation demonstrates that sustainable food can work at an institutional scale bigger than an elite restaurant, a small market or a gourmet's kitchen—provided customers support it. "Ultimately it's going to be consumer demand that will cause change, not Washington," says Fedele Baucio, Bon Appétit's co-founder.

How willing are consumers to rethink the way they shop for—and eat—food? For most people, price will remain the biggest obstacle. Organic food continues to cost on average several times more than its conventional counterparts, and no one goes to farmers' markets for bargains. But not all costs can be measured by a price tag. Once you factor in crop subsidies, ecological damage and what we pay in health-care bills after our fatty, sugary diet makes us sick, conventionally produced food looks a lot pricier.

What we really need to do is something Americans have never done well, and that's to quit thinking big. We already eat four times as much meat and dairy as the rest of the world, and there's not a nutritionist on the planet who would argue that 24-oz. steaks and mounds of buttery mashed potatoes are what any person needs to stay alive. "The idea is that healthy and good-tasting food should be available to everyone," says Hahn Niman. "The food system should be geared toward that."

Whether that happens will ultimately come down to all of us, since we have the chance to choose better food three times a day (or more often, if we're particularly hungry). It's true that most of us would prefer not to think too much about where our food comes from or what it's doing to the planet—after all, as Chipotle's Eells points out, eating is not exactly a "heady intellectual event." But if there's one difference between industrial agriculture and the emerging alternative, it's that very thing: consciousness. Niman takes care with each of his cattle, just as an organic farmer takes care of his produce and smart shoppers take care with what they put in their shopping cart and on the family dinner table. The industrial food system fills us up but leaves us empty—it's based on selective forgetting. But what we eat—how it's raised and how it gets to us—has consequences that can't be ignored any longer. —WITH REPORTING BY REBECCA KAPLAN/NEW YORK ■

## From Niche to Mainstream

Sustainable farming won't make much difference if it remains just a tiny part of the food picture. Here's how to scale up

### Small but many

Large operations can lower costs, but with meat, getting too big leads to problems with antibiotic use and animal welfare. We need smaller farms but lots of them around the country

### More farmers

Organic methods can produce almost as much yield per acre as conventional ones but require far more human labor. In a time of scarce jobs, a return to the farm can help both the land and the economy

### Eat more greens, less meat

Conventional meat takes energy, grain and drugs to produce. We can produce meat sustainably but not in conventional farming's quantities. We should cut back on meat in favor of greens and fruits—which are better for us and for the planet

**Family farm** Bill Niman and his wife Nicolette Hahn Niman are part of a new movement for sustainable meat



# The Search For a Rival

Microsoft is spending massively on its new search business. Is Bing a better engine? Maybe. Can Google play defense? We may soon find out

BY FARHAD MANJOO

**E**VERY YEAR, THE MARKET-research firm Millward Brown conducts a survey to determine the economic worth of the world's brands—in other words, to put a dollar value on the many corporate logos that dominate our lives. Lately the firm's results have been stuck on repeat: Google has claimed the top spot for the past three years. The most recent report values Google's

brand—those six happy letters that herald so many of our jaunts down the Web's rabbit hole—at more than \$100 billion.

What's astonishing about this stat is how effortlessly Google seems to have earned the public's affection. Other companies—Microsoft, Coke, IBM, McDonald's—spend enormous sums to stay in the consciousness. Google, which makes most of its money from ads, rarely advertises itself.

Telling the world how well it does what it does just isn't Google's way.

But Google's humility is being tested as never before. The firm's headquarters in Mountain View, Calif., seem besieged by competitors gaining new momentum. Even nominal allies are questioning the company's motives and long-term plans. In July, Google's largest competitors, Microsoft and Yahoo!, agreed to work together in an attempt to dethrone it as the world's dominant search engine. The deal, which awaits government approval, would create a first: a tenacious, well-financed search rival.

Conflicts are beginning to take place in other areas where Google has ventured. That includes e-mail and office programs (Gmail, Google Docs), a cell-phone operating system (Android) and a Web browser (Chrome). Google scans and sells books, runs a phone system and is even working on a desktop operating system to rival Windows. CEO Eric Schmidt recently stepped down from Apple's board of directors because the two companies now compete in so many areas. The U.S. Justice Department is investigating a legal settlement between Google and the publishing industry over the company's book-scanning service, and Christine Varney, Justice's antitrust chief, said she sees Google as a "problem."

Illustration for TIME by Dave Wheeler

## Tale of the Tape. How Google and Microsoft match up



**Eric Schmidt**  
Google CEO



**Steve Ballmer**  
Microsoft CEO

### THE REVENUE QUESTION

97% of its revenue is from online ads. Everything else is a hobby

Windows and Office rule. It needs another big revenue generator

### THE SEARCH STRATEGY

Ignore Bing for now and focus on making Google even better

Bing is spending \$100 million to get you to try its "decision engine"

### THE PERCEPTION PROBLEM

Google is losing its halo as it expands into phones and operating systems

No one ever loved Microsoft. Bing could help soften its tech-demon image

At the moment, Google's most pressing problem is Microsoft. The software giant is spending \$100 million to market its new search engine, Bing—and in the process, to get us all bummed about Google. Bing's slick ads are unavoidable and blistering. They suggest that Google is broken, that it rarely leads us to what we're looking for and turns us all into blithering zombies who spew out search keywords in casual conversation.

Microsoft claims Bing isn't even a search engine—it's a "decision engine." What that means isn't exactly clear. Bing seems to work the same way Google does: type in some keywords, it gives you some Web results. But the marketing shows signs of gaining traction. According to the media-metrics firm comScore, Bing captured 8.9% of the search-engine queries in July, a tiny increase from 8.4% in June. "All of us in the search industry were surprised by Bing," says Anna Patterson, a former Google engineer who has since gone on to found Cuil (pronounced Cool), one of the many smaller search start-ups in Google's shadow. "It's the first time you have someone with deep pockets that's willing to lose money in order to compete with Google, and they're willing to stick with it over the long term."

Google says it isn't worried, and publicly at least, the company is pretending not to notice Bing. The search engine is Google's cash cow, and the firm constantly pours resources into improving it—hiring the industry's brightest and most experienced engineers, paying them handsomely and letting them work on what is effectively the world's largest data-mining project. Just this month, Google unveiled a project it calls Caffeine, a massive overhaul of its back-end infrastructure that promises to create a faster, more accurate and more comprehensive search engine. "We aren't resting," says Gabriel Stricker, a Google spokesman. "We're continuing to innovate—I'M FEELING LUCKY is getting luckier all the time."

This sort of constant improvement pays off: two-thirds of all searches in the U.S. are now conducted through Google—about 7 billion a month. Yahoo! has less than 20% of the market, and Microsoft less than 10%. Despite Microsoft's claims,

most people think Google works pretty well as it is.

Microsoft argues that the Yahoo! deal will help change that perception. If the partnership is approved, Microsoft will take over Yahoo!'s search engine—type in "Britney Spears" at Yahoo! and you'll get results provided by Bing. Microsoft points out that search engines get smarter as more people use them; if a search engine notices lots of clicks on Spears' music videos after searching for the pop star, it can begin to highlight those videos in future searches. That's how the Yahoo! deal will help Bing beat Google, Microsoft says. By massively expanding its market share to a potential 26%, Microsoft will get access to a much broader pool of user data, which will in turn make it better at predicting what you want when you search.

Google pooh-poohs this claim. Hal Varian, the company's chief economist, has pointed out that most search engines

look at only a small sample of their data in order to improve their results. In other words, Microsoft already has enough data to learn from its users. "It's not the quantity or quality of the ingredients that make a difference. It's the recipes," Varian told CNET. The recipes are Google's proprietary algorithms, which it has slaved over for more than a decade. They're Google's ultimate competitive advantage, and Google believes they'll help it weather the coming assault.

Privately, Googlers will tell you that the Bing ads rankle. They describe them as misleading and unfair, painting a picture of Google that doesn't match reality. Maybe, but Microsoft—a company not previously known for its marketing savvy—is taking a page out of a 1960s Procter & Gamble playbook: create a problem consumers don't know they have, then solve it. Bing!

Can Google play defense if Bing starts to move the needle? Google's first instinct has always been to innovate its way out of trouble. But there are a number of features in Google's search engine that most of the public is unaware of. Like how it can give you the local weather and movie times and perform currency conversions with a single search query. It's not in Google's DNA to run confrontational ads, but it's easy to imagine a campaign that shows off all the amazing things your friendly search giant can do.

At the moment, Google derives about 97% of its revenue from advertising. Barry Schwartz, CEO of the Web consulting firm RustyBrick and an editor at Search Engine Land, says that some at Google have to be getting a little jittery that the company's entire revenue stream rests on a single product. "They keep downplaying that they're competing with other companies—whenever they pitch something like Android or their new Chrome OS, they say it's just an attempt to get people to use the Web more," Schwartz says. But here's the irony: Google faces a problem very similar to the one plaguing Microsoft, which itself makes the bulk of its money from just two products—Windows and Office. Each company sees the other's business as its own path forward. The rest of us, we're just bystanders.





## Own-ward Bound? Prior to the real estate bust, cost and mobility made renting a house a better deal than owning. But the equation is changing

BY BARBARA KIVIAT

FOUR YEARS AGO, MICHAEL CHOE APPEARED in the pages of this magazine for doing something spectacular: choosing to be a renter. At a time when real estate riches were Topic A ("Home \$weet Home," read the TIME cover line), the engineer, from Sacramento, Calif., decided to sell his house and move with his wife and baby boy into a rental. "Compared to owning, rent is cheap," he said back then.

Exceedingly smart move. Since the summer of 2005, house prices in Sacramento have plummeted by half. Choe

and his family—which now includes a second son—watched from the sidelines until the end of last year. That's when the Choes moved back into a home of their own, a four-bedroom they plucked out of foreclosure at a 35% discount from what it had sold for two years earlier.

Is this smart move No. 2? In other words: Is it really time to buy?

As the housing bubble inflated, the math increasingly favored renting. House prices went up and up while rents stayed relatively flat, meaning you could get a lot

more bang for your buck by choosing a lease over a deed. Now, with the housing market in a pulp, the tables are turning. Choe's most recent rental cost him \$1,500 a month. His new mortgage payment, for a same-size house, is \$1,570 (after a 20% down payment). "Not a bad deal," he says—especially considering that once Choe takes into account the money he saves on taxes by deducting his mortgage interest, his new payment is actually a couple of hundred bucks a month less.

Sure, it's easy to toss around reasons

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**A SPECIAL REPORT:**  
How Today's Economic  
Events Are Affecting  
Americans

This is one of a series of articles that have appeared in TIME, FORTUNE, MONEY and REAL SIMPLE magazines and websites as well as on CNN. To learn more, visit [CNN.com/moneyandmainstreet](http://CNN.com/moneyandmainstreet)

it's *always* better to be a homeowner (that mortgage-interest deduction) or it's *always* better to be a renter (no property taxes, and who wants to fix his own garbage disposal?). The more complicated truth is that at certain times it makes more sense to be one or the other.

To figure out which is better now, start with the fact that in the long run, the costs of owning and renting stay in fairly steady proportion. Economists call this the price-to-rent ratio—take the average cost of buying a house and divide it by what you'd pay in rent in a year. The analysis shop *Economy.com* calculates that since 1986, the price-to-rent ratio for U.S. cities has averaged 16.5. In other words, the price of a house is the same as what you'd pay to rent it over 16.5 years.

In late 2001, this ratio began to climb, and by 2003, it was soaring along with home prices, hitting 24.7 in 2005. In those days, you could get 24.7 years in a rental for the cost of a house. That was right about when Choe decided that renting looked like a steal.

But since the end of 2005, the price-to-rent ratio has been falling, thanks to the home-price implosion. Across major U.S. cities, the ratio is back to 17.4, practically its historical average. (If you wrap in rural areas, the figure is smaller and the trend less pronounced but still there.) "A year ago, it was a better deal to rent," says Andres Carbacho Burgos, an economist at *Economy.com*. "Now you have a significant number of areas, especially those hit the hardest by the correction, where, when you compare prices to rents, you'd be led to believe it's a good time to buy."

A significant number—but not everywhere. At *TIME*'s request, *Economy.com* ran the numbers for 54 metro areas and compared their current price-to-rent ratios to what their ratios have been over the past 15 years. The result: in 21 cities, renting still looks to be the better bargain. Among the renter-friendly outposts are Baltimore; Raleigh and Charlotte, N.C.; Salt Lake City; San Antonio; Trenton, N.J.; Philadelphia; Honolulu; Seattle; and Portland, Ore.

Then there's the other end of the spectrum: the cities where houses for sale look inexpensive compared with rentals. The top 10 metro areas on that list are Cleveland, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Cincinnati, and in California, Oakland, Riverside, Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Jose. An important caveat: those cities' 15-year price-to-rent ratios include the bubble years. Does Las Vegas appear cheap? Sure. The current ratio there is 14.6, significantly below where it's been over the past 15 years (19.3). But that average has been influenced by the go-go years.

## To Buy Or to Rent

Price-to-rent ratios measure the selling price of a typical house divided by a year's worth of rent. A ratio that's higher than average for that city tells us that renting is a good deal. A ratio that is lower than average indicates that maybe it's time to buy

### Buying looks like a good deal in these cities ...



### ... while renting is still the smart move in these



Source: Moody's Economy.com analysis of data from the National Association of Realtors and Property and Portfolio Research

Exclude them—by looking at just the 1990s, say—and the result isn't so clear-cut. The '90s-only ratio, 13.9, indicates that renting is still a slightly favorable option.

But let's not get tangled in the numbers. "I wouldn't worry too much about a small amount above or below," says Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, who has done his own analysis of price-to-rent ratios. "It's when you see large divergences that it matters." After all, there are other considerations that go into the decision to buy a house. When Choe bought last fall, he figured the air was still coming out of real estate, but his older son was about to start kindergarten, and he wanted to settle into the right school district. "My thinking was, it's not the bottom, but it's gone down enough," he says.

As another example take, well, Dean

Baker. He and his wife sold their condo in Washington in the spring of 2004 and started renting. The cost of a house relative to a typical apartment rent had doubled in four years—you didn't have to be an economist to notice. That spread has narrowed substantially, but by Baker's calculations, there's more to go. Yet that didn't stop him from buying a couple of months ago. "We got an interest rate at the absolute bottom," he says, "and we wanted outdoor space."

Plus, Baker plans to stay put for a while. That also influences the math on how financially savvy it is to buy. The government mortgage agency *Ginnie Mae* has a rent-vs.-buy calculator on its website—using the default settings, buying starts to make sense after committing to stay for at least four years, although a lot of assumptions go into that calculation: everything from the property-tax rate to mortgage closing costs to the money spent on homeowner's insurance to the yearly home-price appreciation. If prices stay flat instead of going up 2% a year, it'll take nine years for buying to pay off. One thing not taken into account—which should be—is how you might invest your down payment if not in a house and what return you'd see.

Back in Sacramento, Choe is happy in his new home. His living room is decked out in seven-speaker surround sound, a setup he deemed not worth the trouble when he lived in a rental. And he no longer tenses up when the kids take to the walls with crayons.

At the same time, there are parts of nonhomeownership he misses. Renting allowed him to live in much nicer neighborhoods than he could have afforded otherwise; his view from the El Dorado hills is a thing of the past. He's also back to bearing the brunt of all things homeowner-related, like mowing the lawn on a sweaty Sacramento summer day.

Edmund Phelps, a Nobel Prize-winning economist at Columbia University, thinks people should take something else into consideration: Do you really want the bulk of your wealth tied up in a single asset? As we've been reminded, real estate carries risks just like any other investment.

Sure, Uncle Sam twists the tax code to favor buying—and to reinforce the notion that owning a house is synonymous with the American Dream. But is it? "Moving up in the world and attaining material and nonmaterial success—that was always the American Dream," says Phelps. "That didn't necessarily mean you owned your house."

In other words, maybe the calculus of ownership should include a measure of enjoying ourselves at home—whether it's one we've rented or one we've bought. ■

# The Clunker Debunker. Sure, if you have to have a new car, the timing is great. But in a highly disrupted auto market, used cars and leases can still deliver value

BY BOB DIDDLEBOCK

CHRYSLER'S BANKRUPT, AND PONTIAC'S going bye-bye. GM's on eBay, claims its Chevy Volt will get 230 m.p.g. and boasts that a \$4,000 compact is in the works. Volkswagen is merging with Porsche. TV car guys with names like "Deal'n Doug" are screaming about incentives this and rebates that. And the government's porky cash-for-clunkers effort is ridin' herd on gas hogs.

So does that mean it's a good time to acquire a vehicle?

If you're not financially underwater, the answer is probably yes, according to industry experts and recession-whipped car sellers, who point to low-interest loan rates, government givebacks, manufacturer come-ons, desperate dealers willing to haggle and the specter of rising prices down the road.

Auto sales couldn't be much slower, and the near future isn't looking that much better, says Bruce Rapp, who sells GM cars, Subarus and Jaguars in Syracuse, N.Y. "There's incredible change going on in our industry, and it hasn't shaken out yet," he adds.

That uncertainty is translating into savings. But before you put yourself behind the wheel, ask two big questions: Should I get a new or a used car? And should I lease or buy? The experts' short answers are the same as they've always been: it depends on your finances, what you want from a vehicle and your number-crunching acuity.

Buying a new vehicle carries several advantages. Beyond the intangibles—billboarding your economic status, that new-car smell—there's always a great selection of vehicles across all price ranges. You can customize features and technologies (Bluetooth phone systems, iPod terminals, etc.). You can drive the vehicle

as long and as hard as you like. And you gain equity as you pay down your loan.

Then there's the current-day math. A good many carmakers—among them VW—are offering no-interest loans for new cars, while others are advertising rates ranging from 1.9% to 3% for 24-, 36- and 60-month loans. (Compare that with the 5%-to-6% rates for used cars.) "This has been some year," notes Craig Rosenfeld, founder of the Vision Auto Group in Leesport, Pa., which sells Porsches, Audis and VWs. "There have been a lot of changes in marketplace dynamics, in buying habits, sales strategies. We're seeing a lot of traffic, a lot of interesting things happening."

Combine manufacturer rebates, dealer incentives and cash-for-clunkers rebates of up to \$4,500 (which end in November), and there are some huge deals out there. The \$16,000 list price on a 2009 Nissan Versa at Boulder Nissan in Colorado can be whittled to under \$10,000. A buyer could drive off with a new \$18,000 Pontiac Vibe from the Bill Rapp Super Store in Syracuse, N.Y., for \$10,000 if he or she does the numbers right. And Lakewood Fordland in suburban Denver will conceivably trim up to \$17,000 off a loaded 2009 Ford F250 XLT listed at \$49,223.

Still, a new vehicle loses a chassis-size chunk of its value to depreciation when you drive it home. If that thought makes you carsick, a used car might work. Of course, used cars are less expensive, and insuring them costs less. Sure, a used number carries more risks, but in this certified-pre-owned-vehicle era, a model that has historically retained its value—say, a Honda Accord EX or a Subaru Outback—can often promise years of strong, relatively maintenance-free driving.



Pontiac Vibe  
\$18,000

INCENTIVES  
AND REBATES  
\$8,000

FINAL PRICE  
\$10,000

Be aware, though, that according to dealers, used-car prices—especially for popular foreign makes—have climbed more than 10% in the past year. Recession-scarred consumers are holding on to vehicles longer, and the clunkers program is destroying a fair number of older models. Dealers, in turn, are paying more for units at auctions and at trade-in time, and they're not shy about passing their costs on to you. "It may get to the point where used cars are so expensive that it may be worth buying a new car for a few thousand dollars more, and the market will be back to the way it used to be," says Ed Olsen, the sales manager at Boulder Nissan.

Say you want to drive some hot number off a dealer's lot this afternoon, per-

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Nissan Sentra

BUY  
**\$420/MO.**  
FOR 60 MONTHS

LEASE  
**\$210/MO.**  
FOR 39 MONTHS



### Buy or Lease?

With loan interest, a new \$20,000 Nissan Sentra, above, rises to about \$25,000; the cost to lease it is \$2,520 a year. Rebates and incentives can cut the price of a new Pontiac Vibe, below, nearly in half

haps a higher-priced, geeked-out cruiser you might not be able to afford. Despite all the sales rebates, leasing is still a viable alternative. It's not as popular as it was among manufacturers, whose bad arithmetic cost them a fortune a few years back. But if you can find a leaseable model you like—GMAC Financial Services and GM are offering packages for the 2009 Cadillac CTS, several new Chevrolet models and the 2010 Buick Enclave and LaCrosse—the numbers might work if you drive fewer than 15,000 miles a year, want to keep a warrantied vehicle for only a few years and don't have lots of cash (say, 20%) for a decent down payment. One example: a Nissan Sentra priced at \$20,000 will cost a buyer who puts nothing down about \$420 a month with a 60-month loan. Leasing? About \$210 a month over 39 months.

A caveat: if you drive more miles than the lease allows, return the vehicle to the dealer in lousy shape or terminate the lease early, you could be on the hook for some heavy fees, which can dramati-

cally add to a car's overall cost. That's one reason *Consumer Reports*, among other reputable research outfits, has long determined that purchasing, rather than leasing, makes better financial sense for most individual drivers.

Another thing to consider, besides doing something very un-American by paying cash for a vehicle to save a good bundle of money: hire a broker—that is, an independent agent who will shop dealerships for the vehicle you want, find the best prices in your market and negotiate for you. In many cases, it won't cost you anything. The broker is often paid by the dealer as well as by the loan's originator. Bottom line: two motor heads can be better than one.

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Should I pay off debt or invest in savings?

☐ Pay off debt

☐ Invest in savings

Amount you owe:

Rate you pay on debt:

Term of debt:

Monthly amount you get back:

How you will use savings:

Estimated 4 years in value:

Bank of America

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your mon  
Now there is  
Read more

GET EDUCATED

Reducing the  
of credit

GET EDUCATED

Having the m  
conversation

TAKE ACTION

10 Ways to s

# your financial outlook.

information you can use to improve your financial health.

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30%

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10%

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# Life



SPORT HEALTH GOING GREEN



## SPORT

**It's Called Fantasy for a Reason.** Football's online offshoot has taken on a life of its own. Are we getting too caught up in it?

BY SEAN GREGORY

A RICH FANTASY LIFE IS IMPORTANT, but a fantasy life that drains your riches is, in this particular economy, perhaps not the greatest idea. And yet there you are—if you count yourself among the millions of Americans who indulge in fantasy football—spending

your hard-earned money and precious time pretending to be an NFL general manager. Tom Brady is not really on your team, my sweet—dare I say deluded?—friend. Your draft decisions don't affect reality. They only, sadly, bore your nonfantasy friends.

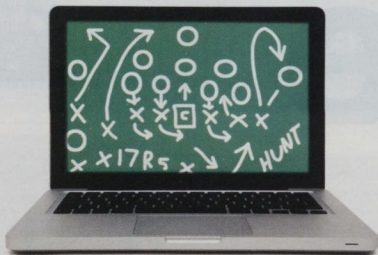
You would think that the recession could sack

fantasy sports, the \$800 million industry in which participants select real pros for their make-believe teams and potentially take home some dough if those players perform. But even in this harshest of realities, fantasy is doing just fine. There are 30 million fantasy players in the U.S. and Canada, ac-

cording to the Fantasy Sports Trade Association, a 54% increase from two years ago.

Another fantasy tracker reports that on average, players are paying \$73 to join football leagues this year, compared with \$59 last year; despite the economic downturn, leagues are upping their entry fees—and their cash

# Fantasy-Football Insurance? A look at who's making money on the sidelines



**INSURANCE** A new site, FantasySports Insurance.com, can protect your fantasy investment

#### HOW IT WORKS

Say you spend \$100 to enter a league and you select Tom Brady for your team. If he gets hurt, you lose. A \$10 policy will cover your \$100 investment

**DISPUTE RESOLUTION** For \$15, lawyers on FantasyDispute.com and SportsJudge.com will settle fights over unfair trades

#### HOW IT WORKS

Both sides submit their arguments online; SportsJudge will even pen a real-looking legal opinion

**TROPHIES** Want a keepsake for your fantasy win? Try TheUltimate Trophy.com

#### HOW IT WORKS

These are no cheap trinkets: trophies cost up to \$800; an artisan can engrave your commish's name on a rosewood football

**EDUCATION** One site, FantasySportsMath.com, offers fantasy-based math exercises

#### HOW IT WORKS

Students draft players—and solve equations—on the basis of their stats. The program teaches decimals and fractions

prizes. Meanwhile, as companies are slashing ad budgets in most places, they are pouring funds into fantasy sites. Fantasy Sports Ventures, which owns or sells advertising for some 500 such sites, has seen revenue double year over year. Says CEO Chris Russo: "Companies want access to an audience that's passionate and engaged."

Not to mention pretty well-off. Fantasy-football players have an average household income of \$81,000. The higher disposable-income level for fantasy geeks helps explain the industry's resiliency. Plus, fantasy can serve as a much needed social escape during tough times. If your job situation gets you down, draft day with your friends can help lift you up.

But is this fantasy fix healthy for America? Accord-

ing to a recent estimate, fantasy football drains \$9 billion out of workplace productivity. Plus, our obsession keeps getting stranger. For example, 11 big-city mayors from across the country are competing against one another for charity in a Yahoo! fantasy-football league this year. And they're really getting into it, which is great, because if there's one thing struggling cities like Buffalo, N.Y., and Oakland, Calif., need, it's their mayors debating a tight-end swap between budget meetings.

"This new skill that I'm acquiring in drafting players—you never know when it might come in handy," says Pam Iorio, mayor of Tampa, Fla. And how, precisely, might her fantasy prowess help her with her day job? "I'm not sure yet," she says.

Like most fantasy fans,

Iorio eventually comes up with a reason to justify playing: she says the game will aid her talent-evaluation skills.

But if you still think fantasy dork mayors are a head scratcher, check out some of the fantasy-related cottage industries that have started up or expanded during the Great Recession. One of the hottest fantasy offshoots is in the trophy business, which is mind-boggling: on the unnecessary-expenditure scale, a keepsake for the winner of a fantasy league is on the charts. One site, TheUltimate

**On average, fantasy-football players spend five hours a week managing their teams**

Trophy.com, just shipped an \$800 prize to a fantasy-league commissioner. "Part of the jollies of fantasy sports is you get to stick it in the face of your buddies," says Tom Harkins, president of FantasySports Trophies.com, whose sales have risen 50% during the downturn. "That trophy says, I know more than you." It also says, I know how to spend money on stupid stuff.

What's more, for \$15, a lawyer on FantasyDispute.com or SportsJudge.com will settle the inevitable arguments that arise in fantasy leagues, like accusations of collusion. Wait—just because I have no chance to win my league, I can't trade my Peyton Manning to my wife, who has a shot at a \$1,000 prize, for her Sage Rosenfelds?

The fantasy craze has even crept into our educational system. Dan Flockhart, a former middle-school math teacher in California, designed a fantasy-based curriculum that thousands of teachers are using in their classrooms. His workbook, *Fantasy Football and Mathematics*, encourages students to draft teams and compute points according to formulas that incorporate basic math concepts like decimals, fractions and negative integers. But before you conclude that this trend is the final sign that American education is doomed, know this: fantasy math may be working. According to preliminary research by the University of Mississippi, most teachers who use Flockhart's program are reporting higher levels of math enthusiasm—and better grades—among students.

Why? "It's all about the hook," says Jennifer Wilnec, a seventh-grade math teacher in Elgin, Ill., who plans to use the fantasy-football curriculum again this year. As the summer winds down, Wilnec is prepping her lessons. "I'm going to have [Chicago Bears quarterback] Jay Cutler on my team," she says. Who knew the future of our children might depend on fantasy football? ■



## HEALTH

# Why HPV Is Still Not a Straight Shot.

The vaccine appears to be safe, but doctors are not ready to mandate immunization



BY ALICE PARK

GENERALLY, THE FACT THAT A vaccine appears to be as safe as the manufacturer promised shouldn't be news. It should be a given. But when it comes to the controversial vaccine for human papillomavirus (HPV), even the most straightforward data come with an asterisk.

Because the virus is sexu-

ally transmitted, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended in 2006 that girls get Merck's Gardasil vaccine at ages 11 and 12 before they become sexually active, so they have the best chance of avoiding the cervical cancer and genital warts caused by HPV. States joined in, attempting to mandate HPV vaccination for school entry,

**Vaccine vanguard** *Texas overturned a rule requiring girls in public schools to get HPV shots*

but parents balked, in part because of concerns about encouraging promiscuity. It didn't help that girls were prone to fainting after getting the shot or that more than two dozen girls died shortly after getting immunized.

The CDC and the FDA report that the rate of adverse events associated with the 23 million doses of Gardasil administered since 2006 is similar to the prelicensing rate among the 21,000 girls and young women who tested it in clinical trials and to that of other vaccines.

That should be reassuring. But the study found that users of Gardasil faint and develop blood clots more often than those receiving other shots. The clots were rare, though. In about 90% of these cases, the

girls may have been more vulnerable to developing them because they smoked or were overweight or on birth-control pills. "Was it that this age group also tends to have these risk factors, or did the vaccine have some sort of role?" asks the CDC's Dr. Barbara Slade, lead author of the paper. "We really don't know."

As GlaxoSmithKline prepares to launch its own HPV vaccine in the U.S. and states continue to debate mandated immunizations, some doctors are taking a wait-and-see approach. "It's too early to begin to make decisions about mandates," says Dr. Joseph Bocchini, who chairs the American Academy of Pediatrics' committee on infectious diseases. "We need more time to educate families and physicians and to get more data on the duration of immunity and safety." That's something many parents will agree with too. ■

## GOING GREEN

# Where Pneumatic Tubes Rule. In Sweden, a smart way to move garbage



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The coolest part of Hammarby Sjöstad, a new eco-neighborhood of Stockholm, is the trash. It gets sucked through pneumatic tubes—at 43 m.p.h. (70 km/h)—after residents drop their household waste into

special chutes: one for food that will get composted, another for paper to be recycled and a third for garbage that can be burned. As the latter gets incinerated, the energy produced is converted into district heating and elec-

tricity. The goal is both to keep garbage out of landfills and ultimately to produce half the neighborhood's energy. "Everything people are throwing away is coming back in one way or another," says Hammarby

spokesman Erik Freudenthal. And that includes sewage. It gets turned into fertilizer as well as biogas, which is used to fuel buses, taxis and approximately 1,000 gas stoves. Yum! —BY JASON SPINGARN-KOFF ■



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# Arts

COMEDY MOVIES SHORTLIST



COMEDY

## Take Obama.

**Please!** With a President who isn't a punch line, these are trying times for stand-up comics. But they are trying



**'The most common question [at a health-care town-hall meeting] the seniors asked Obama was, "What have you done with Eisenhower?"'**

—CONAN O'BRIEN



BY RICHARD ZOGLIN

THE CROWD SITTING ELBOW TO ELBOW in the basement performance space at New York City's Comedy Cellar on a recent Wednesday night had pretty much had its fill of sex jokes, gay jokes, rants about New York cabdrivers and time-filling banter with the couple in the front row who had just gotten married a week ago. Then, a few minutes after midnight, James Smith, a lanky Australian stand-up who has appeared on HBO's *Flight of the Conchords*, bounded onto the stage for a 15-minute set to do something a little different. He talked politics.

Some of his targets were old reliables like Bill Clinton, fresh from his diplomatic jaunt to North Korea. ("We need to bring two hot Asian chicks back from North Korea in a private jet," said Smith, imagining the genesis of Clinton's recent mission. "Who should we get?") He dived into the economic crisis, pinpointing the bitter irony of banks' having to declare bankruptcy ("How do you f--- up your only job?"). And he waded fearlessly into perhaps the most treacherous satiric waters of all: the new resident of the White House.

Making jokes about Barack Obama is the big test for political comedians these days, and like many, Smith did it mostly by talking around him. Obama could never get away with the kind of sexual shenanigans that Clinton did, he mused, because Michelle wouldn't stand for it: "She would impeach him herself!" Obama's election victory was inevitable the minute Oprah Winfrey endorsed him: "There's nothing

bigger than Oprah. Oprah can do anything. 'Betcha can't make a black man President.' 'Watch me!' The joke isn't Obama himself; it's the cultural shift—and the country's reaction to it—that he represents.

**President Walks into a Bar ...**

THE VOTES HAD BARELY BEEN COUNTED last November when the pundits started expressing anxiety. No, not just about whether the new President could right the economy or reform health care. The burning question for the Obama age: What the heck were political comedians going to do? For eight years they had enjoyed a comedic gift from the gods in George W. Bush, whose bumbling presidency provided even richer material than the cartoonish excesses of the Clinton years. But Obama, with his obvious smarts, low-key style and (most important) ability to catch the prevailing tone of irony and laugh at himself, has left the comics with little to hang their punch lines on. The best Jay Leno could do during the campaign was to poke fun at Obama's mediocre bowling skills. That went into the gutter fast.

Political satire, of course, has had its ups and downs in American comedy. The Eisenhower 1950s proved a fruitful time for outsider satirists like Mort Sahl and Lenny Bruce, and the counterculture years of the late '60s and '70s gave rise to

stand-up social commentators like George Carlin, Richard Pryor and Robert Klein. By the '80s, however, stand-up had mostly retreated to the home front (Roseanne Barr), the trivia of everyday life (Jerry Seinfeld) and the carefully nonpartisan "topical" jokes of Johnny Carson. In the George W. Bush years, political comedy came back in style, not just for late-night hosts like David Letterman and Jon Stewart—who are far more willing than Carson was to let their (usually left-of-center) political views show through—but also for the foot soldiers of the comedy clubs, where even guys who made their living from penis jokes were getting laughs from W.

With Bush's departure from the scene, much of the political urgency has drifted away from stand-up comedy. Pay a visit to a typical comedy club these days and you're more apt to get pummeled with details of the comedian's dating life than with his views on Obama's stimulus plan. "I'm not hearing a ton of political stuff," says Kevin Flynn, a New York-based stand-up who has a couple of Obama jokes in his repertoire but, like a lot of his colleagues, is still feeling his way along with the change in Administrations. But he doesn't think there's cause for alarm. "The first six months of Bill Clinton—and George Bush too—nothing much happened that could be made fun of. Everybody is waiting for Obama to do something or for the winds to change. It hasn't happened yet."

**Ripped from the Headlines**

STILL, THE BUSH YEARS GOT STAND-UP comics reading the headlines again, and they haven't stopped. The economic crisis has been a hot topic for months, health care is coming on strong, and favorite targets like Sarah Palin and Clinton have helped out by refusing to leave the stage. But when it comes to Obama, the comics are still groping. Greg Geraldo, a club stalwart whose material was filled with anti-Bush gibes a few years ago, has moved on to Obama, but mostly to execute a deft pivot—like a bit on John McCain's befuddlement at how to combat his Democratic foe during the presidential campaign. "How the f--- am I losing? I'm a war hero!" he imagines McCain thinking. "He came this close to saying, 'He's black!'" Ted Alexandro gets a big laugh by harking back to white America's old fears of blacks moving onto their turf: "Not only is Barack Obama our first black President, but it's the end of white Presidents forever. Because you know what they say ..."

The racial angle has also provided good fodder for African-American comics like Kyle Grooms (who does one of the better Obama impressions) and Larry Wilmore,



**'Not only is Barack Obama our first black President, but it's the end of white Presidents forever. Because you know what they say ...'**

—TED ALEXANDRO



**'He's so positive. [During the campaign, he said] "Yes, we can!" And now he's like, "F\_\_! I thought we could!"'**

—JAMES SMITH

the *Daily Show's* "senior black correspondent," who also talks about Obama in his stand-up act. Yet Wilmore's jabs are directed, as usual, mostly at the country's reaction to Obama ("that is a very comfortable level of black") rather than the President himself; the worst he can do is lampoon Obama's habit of giving long-winded answers to even simple questions.

The problem, for white comics as well as black ones, is that they actually like Obama, and they say so. Even Lewis Black, the quivering maestro of political outrage, strains to put an edge on his obvious admiration for the President. "He's the first leader in my lifetime who's actually full of hope," Black says in his act. "His nipples are bursting with hope! He's lactating hope!" Talking after a recent set at New York's Gotham Comedy Club, Black admits that Obama is difficult to make fun of but insists he's had no trouble finding political material. "For me, it was never Bush. It was the social issues. Just because Bush left office, that doesn't mean stupidity has fled the country."

Letterman, typically, managed to turn the comedian's predicament itself into the joke. For months after Obama's Inauguration, the *Late Show* host trotted out a nerdy staff writer to read his latest attempts at coming up with Obama jokes—all of which turned out to be lamely repurposed Bush jokes. ("Barack Obama is so dumb, when he was governor of Texas, someone

asked him what the capital of Texas is, and he said, 'Capital T.'") Still, the edge that crept into Letterman's comedy during the Bush years has, if anything, only gotten sharper. (Yes, he was forced to apologize for a joke about Palin's daughter, but his obvious distaste for the former Alaska governor is evident in the wisecracks that have continued ever since.) In fact, Letterman's monologues have doubled in length—from eight jokes a night to 16 or more—in the past year. "Sure, we'd love to see Obama trip on an Oriental rug," says Letterman writer Bill Scheft. "But there's plenty there. Have you seen those town-hall meetings?"

Jon Stewart's *Daily Show* too has seemed even more energized in the Obama era. Stewart's great discovery, of course, was that political satire in the 2000s no longer requires actual jokes. All that's needed is merely to present the hypocrisy and pomposity of political leaders in their raw, unvarnished form (Republicans denouncing Sonia Sotomayor on the floor of the U.S. Senate, say, before her inevitable confirmation) and append it with a sarcastic exclamation point or simply a mugging reaction shot. And if conservative politicians and talk-show hosts still bear the brunt of most of Stewart's barbs, Obama has hardly come away unscathed—from Stewart's early lampooning of Obama worship (in one video, the Democratic candidate was presented to the world like the royal cub in *The Lion King*) to his impatience with the friendly interplay between Obama and

**'Will we get the change that we forced him to promise us?'**

—JOHN OLIVER



**'How do you counter the fear by some whites that they are literally losing their country?' 'Well, the first step is to acknowledge that they are literally losing their country.'**

—LARRY WILMORE

(in response to Jon Stewart)



audience members at his first health-care town-hall meeting: "Is this a town hall or a Tom Jones concert?"

Indeed, the Obama era has helped clarify an often overlooked dichotomy in late-night TV comedy: the divide between the political satirists (Stewart, Stephen Colbert, Letterman much of the time) and the topical jokesters (Leno, Conan O'Brien and Jimmy Fallon). O'Brien's middle-of-the-road, Carsonsque wisecracks in particular ("President Obama's approval ratings have slumped to an all-time low, which explains Obama's new Secret Service code name: NBC") are looking comparatively tame now that he's opposite the increasingly politicized Letterman—whose contempt for Bush-era politics comes through in his interviews as much as his gag lines. (It may not be a coincidence that Letterman is beating O'Brien in the ratings.) Letterman may have wimped out in apologizing for his Palin joke, but it's hard to imagine O'Brien even cracking a Palin joke worth apologizing for.

The Bush presidency, it turns out, may have had a more lasting impact than comedians appreciate. As it opened up a bitter divide in the country, it forced stand-up comedians to take notice—and take sides. Even with a President who's no longer a ready-made joke, for comedians, there's no going back. As for Obama, he'll need to watch his step. Those White House rugs can be dangerous.

# MOVIES

## Kill Adolf. Tarantino's World War II saga revives the art of tense film dialogue—and knocks off Hitler

BY RICHARD CORLISS

BACK IN HIS DAYS AS THE GEEK GOD of clerks at Manhattan Beach Video Archives, Quentin Tarantino must have looked at all those World War II movies, especially the ones about plots to kill Hitler, and realized what was wrong: everybody knows the ending. Bad guys lose. Hitler died in his bunker. Where's the suspense? Where's the ambiguity? Most films about the war treat the historical record as sacred, which often serves as an excuse for lofty moral judgments. Only a few bold souls created alternative versions, like the 1963 film *It Happened Here*, in which Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo imagined a Nazi-occupied Britain. Tarantino's rewrite is more brazen still, with a twist that's pure Hollywood. Hitler will die where? In a movie theater. And who will kill him? Some Jews.

*Inglourious Basterds*—the anomalies in spelling are to distinguish Tarantino's film from a not-so-hot 1978 Italian movie variation on *The Dirty Dozen*—convenes Resistance fighters from Germany and France and soldiers from Britain and the U.S. in a scheme to destroy the Third Reich. (Apparently the Russians were too busy actually winning the ground war to take part.) The Basterds are a unit of Jews—American and German—under the command of Brad Pitt's Lieutenant Aldo Raine (at right), a tough, jovial hillbilly who sees his mission as the killing and scalping of Nazis. Any German soldiers, in fact. They're all the same to Aldo.

The scalping is appropriately detailed, and several guns are pointed at the tender areas of adversaries. But this is a 2½-hour war movie without a single scene on the front lines. No long tracking shots of soldiers in foxholes or marching across an open field with a chorus of rifle fire. Fans of the operatic violence in *Pulp Fiction* and the *Kill Bill* movies eager for a thick

**In this war movie without any scenes on the front lines, the most explosive confrontations are verbal**



new slab of steak Tarantino will be disappointed. There are glimpses of Q.T.'s deft cinematic footwork: a quick flashback to the Basterds' springing of a famous Nazi killer from prison; a moment in bed with a German officer and his French interpreter; a crowd shot in which high-ranking Nazis are ID'd with their names printed over their heads. Most of the film, though, reminds you that Tarantino may be a world-class director but what he really wants to do is write. Here the most explosive confrontations are verbal—long dialogues, often admirably tense and usually in French or German. (It's basically a foreign-language film.) The chats take the form of interrogations. A German officer probes; a Resistance fighter evades.

The officer, Colonel Hans Landa (Christopher Waltz), is a nastily smooth operator: oozing charm like pus, with a courtly tone and a preening self-regard. Known as the Jew Hunter, he calls himself a detective, trying to stop a war crime. Among his suspects are a French Jewess, Shosanna Dreyfus (Mélanie Laurent), who has escaped Landa's grasp and now runs a movie theater in Paris; and Bridget Von Hammersmark (Diane Kruger), a leading lady of German cinema who is secretly in league with British intelligence. Many Tarantino movies are female revenge fantasies, in which strong women plot the deaths of men who wronged them. In Shosanna and Bridget, the writer-director has fashioned two of his steeliest, most principled femmes fatales.

Laurent, Kruger and Waltz (who earned the Best Actor award at Cannes in May) are the soul of the film. Their conversations percolate with menace because Tarantino plants plot elements that blossom later for maximum impact. When Colonel Landa asks one of the ladies for her shoe and, at a restaurant, orders milk for the other, you feel nooses tightening around their necks and yours. In these scenes and another in a basement bar where the smallest wrong gesture cues a bloodbath, Tarantino shows how to achieve drama through whispers and forced smiles. The parallel plot of a budding romance between Shosanna and a German war hero (Daniel Brühl) has a similar trajectory—the pot simmers, then the lid blows off—and the same artful mix of subtlety and surprise. These vignettes work much better than the big set pieces, with the Nazis in the movie theater or the Basterds in the field. You needn't scalp a man to make his hair stand on end.

It's just possible that Tarantino, having played a trick on history, is also fooling his fans. They think they're in for a Hollywood-style war movie starring Brad Pitt. What they're really getting is the cagiest, craziest, grandest European film of the year. ■



# Short List

TIME'S PICKS FOR THE WEEK



## 1 **DVD** thirtysomething, the Complete First Season

Earnest young couples shared (and shared) their feelings in this talky, sly, funny 1987 serial that showed there was absorbing TV drama beyond hospitals and precincts. Were its yuppies endearing or irritating? Both. Because when you combine passion and annoyance, you get love.

## 2 **MUSIC** Walking on a Wire

From the folk rock of Fairport Convention to his '70s collaborations with ex-wife Linda to his recent incarnation as a solo grump, Richard Thompson has always been a craftsman. This four-CD box set distills the best of his output and connects the dots of his evolution.

## 3 **DVD** Trouble the Water

When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, some residents couldn't get out. One of them, Kimberly Rivers Roberts, was a video camera to record the spectacle of horror and heroism in the Ninth Ward. Experience it in this devastating, inspiring Oscar-nominated documentary.

## 4 **BOOK** The Impostor's Daughter

Laurie Sandell's father was a brilliant, fiery Argentine economist who fought in Vietnam. Except he wasn't. He was an impostor and a scam artist. Her eloquent graphic novel documents the slow collapse of his identity, which almost takes hers with it.

## 5 **MOVIE** Shorts

When Robert Rodriguez isn't making violent, cunning dramas (*Sin City*), he does children's movies (*Spy Kids*). This one, about a boy and a magic rock, won't win a Nobel, but it has cute actors, a zigzagging story line and a moral about not needing everything you wish for.



## John Malkovich's Short List

Malkovich has worn many hats since his days as a founding member of Chicago's famed Steppenwolf Theatre Company. This month HBO airs *Which Way Home*, a documentary about child migrants of which he was an executive producer. In September, he stars in the film adaptation of J.M. Coetzee's award-winning novel *Disgrace*. In his free time, he's often to be found reading about or basking in foreign cultures.

### Storyteller with heart

I'll read pretty much anything by Andrei Makine, a Russian novelist who writes in French. He's a great humanist and storyteller, one of the people I most like to read when I have an urge/need to believe in the common decency of humans.

### Viennese splendor

Having recently spent time in Vienna, I am stunned by the culture, scope and conviviality of the city that was the birthplace of the modern. In art: Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka. In literature: Schnitzler, Zweig, Kraus. In architecture: Wagner, Hoffmann, Loos. In psychology, Freud. In philosophy, Wittgenstein. In music: Mahler and Schoenberg. All of them supremely gifted and influential.

### A view of Arab culture

David Pryce-Jones' *The Closed Circle* offers an interpretation of Arab culture for those Westerners ignorant of the many Arabs who have given their all in the battle against obscurantism, idiocy and tribalism.

### Amusing (and cautionary) tales

Anything by Roberto Bolaño, especially his Mexico City tome, *The Savage Detectives*. Also his novella *Nazi Literature in the Americas*, an amusing albeit cautionary tale allegedly based on Bolaño's interaction with "left wing" writers. Is anyone listening?

### Web wake-up call

DarkRoastedBlend.com is a perfect morning wake-up—a site filled with images of earth's strange dreamers, oddballs, visionaries, travelers and destinations.



Arts Online

For more reviews and openings this weekend, go to [time.com/entertainment](http://time.com/entertainment)



Joel

## Stein

## Can I Kill You? If there are going to be death panels, you're really going to want me on yours. Me and Paula Abdul

I HAVE NEVER DETERMINED WHETHER ANYONE WOULD live or die, which I consider a gaping hole in my résumé. So when I heard a rumor that the government was creating a death panel to determine which sick people get to receive medical care, I knew I had to be on it.

I am not an obvious choice for any panel that doesn't involve amateur performers and a large gong. But you need me on your death panel precisely because, unlike politicians and doctors, I can admit that we already have death panels; they just prefer to go by the name insurance companies. Some people get rejected by the death panels because of pre-existing conditions, lifetime spending caps or drug co-payments they can't afford.

Others die because they are freelancers and don't have insurance, so they don't go to doctors. Others might not get the coverage they need because they wrote a column that called insurance companies death panels.

Instead of sorting through stacks of forms, I'll set my death panel behind huge wooden desks in a big empty room like the audition scene in *Flashdance*. I know this will make it hard for the sickest people to attend, and that will make my first cut much easier. I will green-light medical intervention on four criteria: cost, likelihood of success, years of life saved and a person's awesomeness. For example, we'd all shell out to keep Justin Timberlake going for another 50 years, but we probably wouldn't kick in much to spot Michael Vick an extra four months. And we can all agree that \$6 million is a pretty good deal to make Lee Majors bionic again.

Though I do want to stick with the name death panel, we will handle all forms of medicine, including plastic surgery. Michelle Pfeiffer and Demi Moore, yes; Joan Rivers, no. And while there will be a lot fewer MRIs covered, hair-waxing will be free. We will be able to afford that because much of the cost of health care will be offset by selling the television rights to our panel. If ratings lag, I am fully prepared to appoint Paula Abdul, although I'm aware that this might raise our prescription-drug costs.

My main challenge in setting up the panel will be getting the public to accept that there's a limited amount of health care to ration. To figure out my marketing plan, I called an Eskimo, since everyone thinks Eskimo are adorable despite the fact that they sent old people

out to sea on ice floes. If we tried that instead of sending them to Florida, people would hate the Jews even more.

I met Nasuk—who was a delegate from Alaska at the 2008 Democratic National Convention—while riding a train in Denver one morning. She showed me some photos of her family eating whale. It turns out you do not want to look at a family eating whale when you are hungover.

The first thing I learned from talking to Nasuk is that calling someone an Eskimo isn't cool, since some believe it's a term for raw-meat eater. That sounded pretty bad until I realized it's exactly what *yuppie* meant in the 1980s. A proud Inupiat, Nasuk said that when her people were hunter-gatherers in the freezing North

Slope, they sometimes had to leave behind the weak and elderly.

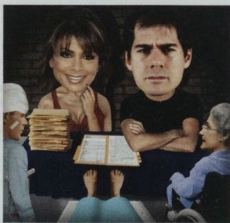
"My understanding is that elders would voluntarily stay behind.

It wouldn't have been a cruel practice. It would have been an acceptance of 'I'm dying. Let me be on my way,'" she said. Which is exactly how I'll put it on my death panel: "We're leaving you to be on your way out of this super-expensive hospital bed."

The idea that the not-Eskimo murdered their elders, Nasuk said, is absurd. The elderly, she said, are, in fact, rarely questioned and receive the first fish caught and

animal hunted. "I don't know why a lot of stories are told about Alaska," she said. "Like that you guys kiss with your noses?" I suggested. "Yeah, we kiss with our noses!" she said, informing me that I had picked the one not-Eskimo rumor that was true. Feeling even more stupid, I mentioned how dumb it was that we think they have tons of names for snow. Nasuk told me that her native language does indeed have many names for snow. I totally think they kill their old people.

So Nasuk is definitely going to be on my panel, along with me, Abdul, Donald Trump and, because of the aesthetic plastic-surgery decisions, Tyra Banks. And while our triage will shorten some lives, we'll lengthen and improve many more. But if Americans would rather take a phony moral high ground instead of admitting that there are a limited number of organs, specialists, equipment, medicine and money, then I'll have to live with not being a panelist. And to make myself feel better, I'm going to use my health insurance to see an acupuncturist, a chiropractor, a psychologist and a Pilates instructor. ■



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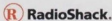
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